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THE GREATER PARABLES  
OF TOLSTOY





# THE GREATER PARABLES OF TOLSTOY

WITH INTERPRETATIONS

AS TOLD TO HIS CONGREGATION

BY

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## PREFACE

AFTER the manner of the Galilean and his learners, the preacher gave these Parables and Interpretations to his congregation, on successive Sunday evenings, substantially as afterwards written out and here printed. He offers them now as one suggestion towards that stronger and wider use of its opportunities the modern pulpit is feeling after.

How far they express the preacher's own views does not concern the present purpose, which is to accurately condense and faithfully expound the stories. He has taken no liberties with his author; but whilst compelled to entirely pass over multitudes of incidents, he has stated and summarised the most important with painstaking fidelity, and adhered with absolute veracity to the course of the narratives. Neither has he wilfully tampered with his author's message; but, scrupulously ignoring the assents or dissents of his own mind, has anxiously endeavoured to set forth the ideas he believed to be in the mind of Tolstoy. The interpreter is less likely to have misled his readers, since he has for many years been a sympathetic student of, and in general agreement with, the writings of the greatest of modern Christians.

It is with the greater boldness, therefore, that as a summary of Tolstoy's social and ethical ideas, and as a simple and beguiling introduction to the voluminous writings themselves, the preacher offers these *Parables and their Interpretations*.

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I  
ANNA KARENINA

I  
A PARABLE OF LAWLESS LOVE  
AND LOVELESS LAW



# ANNA KARENINA

## A PARABLE OF LAWLESS LOVE AND LOVELESS LAW

THIS is the story of the loveless marriage of the beautiful and brilliant Anna Arkadyevna and the learned and immaculate Alekséi Aleksandrovitch Karénin; and of the marriageless love of Anna Karénina and the noble and handsome Alekséi Ivanovitch Vronsky—a story of worldliness and animalism, of despair and death. But through these dark meshes of loveless law and lawless love are woven also golden threads from the honest courtship and wedlock of Konstantin Dmitriévitch Levin and the Princess Kitty Shcherbatskaïa—a story of search for the good of life, the meaning of life, the way of peace, against whose shining relief the story of sin appears only more pitiful. The author's purpose requires us to give a short outline of this subordinate tale—this story within a story.

Konstantin Dmitriévitch Levin — a fair-complexioned, broad-shouldered man with curly hair—was a landed proprietor, a raiser of cattle, a celebrated hunter, an enormous worker, a gymnast who could lift two hundred pounds with one hand, and exercised himself with dumb-bells weighing forty pounds each

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—the genius of Russian peasanthood glorified—child-like, yet greatly a man—"worth a thousand men," his friends said. This simple, strong son of Nature made occasional descents upon the fashionables and dilettanti of St Petersburg and Moscow ; setting their jaded minds astrain with his fresh views ; exploding the bookish theories of liberal professors by his accounts of hand-to-hand conflicts with the fatalism, conservatism, and distrust of the peasants he loved and lived amongst ; smashing up their liberal affectations of Western civilisation and institutions ; showing that the Russian character must go its own royal way to perfectness. His early love for the Princess Kitty Shcherbatskaïa was crossed for a time by the shadow of him who afterwards quite extinguished the light of Anna Karénina's life ; but the true and simple natures of both enabled them, after long trial, to triumph in a union whose homespun virtues, misunderstandings and reconciliations, tribulations and ecstasies, transitory estrangements and lasting peace, form a true human contrast to the infernal drama which is played alongside. The story culminates in Levin's rewarded search for truth, for the meaning of life, for peace of soul. To this we must, however, shortly return again. Meantime we turn to the chief actors and darker scenes in this tragedy of marriage without love, and love without marriage.

The beauty of Anna Arkadyevna was something over and above her grace and elegance, her lovely face, dark curly locks, gray eyes shining through their long lashes ; it seemed to arise more from her abounding health and vitality ; her whole person was radiant with the overflowing spirits of health, happi-



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ness, and youth. Yet was there a something infernal glancing occasionally through her womanly charms—a veiled lightning in her smile, a conflagration on her brow, a deepness in her half-shut eyes, an unexpected craft and mockery on her rounded cheek; a something that at one time suggested a whole world of complicated and poetic interest, and at another a terrible and cruel attraction. At times a far-seeing friend had glimpses of this, and doubted; and Anna doubted herself—doubted whether there were not a moral skeleton within her fair personality, another being who guided her loves and hates against her better self, and whom she feared. There was awful risk and jeopardy in the scheme of the intriguing aunt who forced the innocent and unsuspecting Anna upon the frigid and friendless Karénin, and joined the hand of such a woman to a husband such as has now to be described.

Amongst all the officials of the Russian Government no minister was more respected and influential than Alekséi Aleksandrovitch Karénin. His reputation as a statesman was amongst the foremost, whilst his personal character was excellent, remarkable, and his integrity such that not even personal friendship or kin could bend him from his honest judgment. His friends, who admired but could not love, summed him up as talented, learned, and something divine.

This good man, however, was unfortunate in that he could not throw off the official even in his home, nor lose the ministerial machine in the husband. Even at the fireside and in the chamber he was forever precise, legal, formal. He talked to his wife just as he prepared reports. He delivered pedantic moral discourses to her when she needed admonition, wrote her official letters as if she were a committee,

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so that she felt herself more like a junior minister than a wife. It would be wrong to say that Karénin did not love his wife and only son ; but he buried the affection in a box, shut the box in his heart, sealed it with formality, and covered up any feeling he had with a prevailing habit of irony. The result was that Anna Karénina thought him incapable of love, felt all that was vital in her crushed by his presence, and was compelled to live her individual life apart from him. To her it seemed that he was eaten up of the world, of ambition, and—womanlike—she could not understand why a man should prefer the world to love. In this respect he was well summed up by a shrill woman who declared that, for all his cleverness, Karénin was a blockhead ! He was anxious to live only in his own wise, correct fashion, to pursue his own honourable career, and not to permit his wife to interrupt it. His very rectitude maddened her, though she could not explain why. People said he was moral, upright, religious, a Christian ; but to her he seemed a mean, vile man, to whose icy perfection any wrath, violence, killing, would have been preferable. “Go away, go away !” she said once, in a frenzy, stricken with fever, pushing him with one of her burning hands ; “you are too perfect !”

Such was the wedded life of the Karénins for some time after their only child was born ; when Anna was summoned to Moscow to endeavour to effect a reconciliation between her brother Stiva—who was president of one of the courts—and his wife. Stiva possessed all the health, good humour, good digestion which could make a man of the world popular with his household, society, and himself. But this had not prevented him deceiving his wife, though he loved her

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and her children in his own indolent fashion, taking home big pears to amuse them. Even thus he was still universal favourite, he was so attractive in his clean, well-perfumed, healthy and happy body, his good-natured amiability; and the servants felt so sorry to see him snoozing on the leathern couch in the library, with his gold-embroidered slippers on. So his sister Anna was sent for from St Petersburg to reconcile the uncomfortable husband and the injured wife, and, after such conversation with them both as may be imagined, she succeeded. This was Anna's first acquaintance with sin; and though it was only at second-hand, who would say it did not form a dangerous introduction—especially in view of her own unhappy married life—and start a thought which, all unconscious to herself, might be taking shape in her inner being? And it was at this very juncture that another fateful event happened—another dark thread was slipped into the loom by the Destinies.

When she alighted at the railway station at Moscow, Anna met the Count Alekséi Ivanovitch Vronsky, and a baleful attraction at once made itself felt between them. Count Vronsky was immensely rich, handsome, officially attached to the Tsar's person, one of the finest specimens of the gilded youth of St Petersburg. He led the luxurious and dissipated life usual with wealthy officers, and conformed in all respects to their artificial and monstrous code of honour. Yet he had fine qualities. He was chivalrous—saved a woman from drowning when a mere boy; magnanimous—wanted to give up his whole fortune to his brother; generous—thrust two hundred roubles into the hand of the station-master to give

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to the wife of a porter who had fallen under the wheels just as Anna arrived, so that to Anna he immediately became a hero. Mark that omen of the man crushed to death under the wheels of the engine; we shall hear more of it! In after days it came back to them in frightsome dreams of a little old man rummaging in a sack or gourd, muttering unintelligible words, shaking it over their heads; and therein lay the terror of their dream.

Anna did not remain long in Moscow; but long enough to meet Vronsky's electric glance athwart lighted staircases, and be whirled by him round ballrooms in all the intoxication of a new passion. Terrified at herself, she telegraphed to her husband, and fled home to St Petersburg. But her fate accompanied her in the shape of Vronsky, who encountered her at one of the side stations, and spoke words her reason feared, but her heart longed to hear. Not without effect, it would seem; for as her husband met her at St Petersburg, the thought started in her mind was, "Ach! why are his ears so long?"

After this, Vronsky and Anna met frequently, chiefly through his cousin as an ally—the Princess Betsy Tverskaïa—who facilitated their meetings at her house; and their mutual infatuation grew by what it fed on. Vronsky, on his part, was conscious of nothing but the beatific focus to which his imagination and powers were driving with frightful rapidity. He refused promotion because it would have removed him from St Petersburg; for, unlike Karénin, when ambition and love came into conflict, it was love that triumphed. He was prepared to leave everything for her and with her, to go and bury themselves somewhere with their love. Anna, for

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her part, was completely swallowed up in the ruling passion of her life; and though she made a feeble effort to break the silken fetters which made her blush for the first time in her life, which made her feel guilty in her own sight, it was only to be swept away by the next breath of passion, and to convey with her eyes that sinful consent her tongue refused to utter.

When, after nearly a year, the impossible, the terrible had happened, humiliation, horror, contempt, despair chased each other through her being, and flinging herself upon her lover she exclaimed, "All is ended; I have nothing but thee!"

When the *fama* spread abroad—which it soon did, Karénin's exalted rank giving it greater notoriety—it was received just as similar things are received among ourselves. Vronsky's mother was rather pleased at her son's manliness; the fast young men envied him; the fashionable young ladies were jealous of Anna; experienced people looked with regret to the prospect of a disgraceful scandal; but all alike found an occasion of universal amusement, and were hardly able to conceal their hilarity. It was especially when they looked upon the outraged husband that people were boundlessly entertained, that they exhibited most derision and disdain; so that he compared himself to some poor, maimed cur, howling with pain, tortured to death by other dogs on account of its very misery. But all this came gradually, as the sin was prolonged, intensified, renowned; for it is the nature of such things never to grow less, but more.

And now arose that strange social complication and moral confusion which is Nature's attempt to

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prevent wrong-doers going further wrong. Feeling the increasing necessity of being all in all to each other, Vronsky and Anna tried to break with the past; but the past refused to be broken clean off. Boldness also increased, and Vronsky ventured openly to visit her at her husband's house. But there was her young boy, a constant obstacle to their interviews, with his inquisitive face and perplexed mind; noticing that his father treated as his greatest foe the very man whom he saw his mother treat as her best friend; not knowing whether he should regard him as foe or friend. Falsehood also grew. Anna became alarmed at her increasing facility in telling lies, astonished at her own tone of natural and calm assurance; she felt herself lifted up as by some invisible power and clad in an impenetrable armour of falsehood; she was possessed by the demon of untruth, and ruled by the very spirit of lies. Yet, by a strange paradox, humiliation also increased. She began now to feel a greater shame and to fear a worse dishonour. She tried to assure her lover that she was "proud of . . . proud of," but her tongue refused to say of what; her utterance was choked by tears of shame and despair. At one time she resolved to leave her husband's house, not because of the physical repulsion with which he filled her, but to cut the hideous knot getting ever more tangled. Then she realised that she had no power to escape from her situation, false and dishonourable though it was, for her position in society was still dear to her; she thought how dreadful were that door shut against her, never again to be opened; and she wept. Absent-mindedly she discovered that she had taken her hair in her hands and was pulling it. The

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position was endurable only because all believed it to be transitory ; yet no one knew what to do to bring it to an end. Anna hoped to find relief from the horrible oppression of shame, falsehood, uncertainty, by openly confessing all to her husband ; and this she did when returning with him in their carriage from some races in which Vronsky had a fall, after foully breaking the back of his beautiful mare Frou-Frou, upon which Anna had betrayed herself, by her agitation and distress, to all the onlookers. Yet confession brought no relief, though it put her husband in a new dilemma. Even the moral pedant could not but be moved by her passionate outcry, "I fear you, I hate you !"

To do Karénin justice, his trouble of mind was greater and more poignant than any gave him credit for. He felt like a man who should come home and find his house barricaded against him. The bridge of his artificial life broke, and the abyss of the actual yawned at his feet. He stooped as stoops only the man who waits the final blow. He also felt shame and horror—"I am weak, I am humiliated," he murmured ; "I am wounded, I am killed, I am no longer a man !" for Karénin was capable of soul-felt emotion, of extreme irritation ; at women's or children's tears he would entirely lose his self-control and the use of his faculties. When the worst came, his face assumed an expression of mortal petrification.

Now the dilemma that Anna's confession threw him upon was this :—Either he must retain in his home a wife whose sin he could no longer wink at, or he must send her away and let the veil of appearances fall ; and either course was repugnant to him. For a time he chose the first course. He concluded that it would

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be better to keep his wife under his own care, shielding his misfortune from the eyes of the world as far as possible, and punishing her by refusing her liberty. Thinking still of his own worldly position, he demanded that she should keep up appearances for the sake of preserving his honour. Absorbed by his ideal of social hypocrisy, he determined that both his wife and her sin should be for him non-existent. And as the pharisee is always by to support the hypocrite, he began to conjure up higher arguments which might sanction this course, drawn from religion—such as the possibility of her salvation. Similar reasons determined him against seeking divorce; for divorce meant public revelations, and his whole aim was to keep up the appearances he called his “honour.” A base feeling of revenge mingled also with his worldly selfishness; for by refusing divorce he would keep her from Vronsky, and he was determined that her fault should not turn out to her advantage; she ought not to be happy, though he saw no reason why he should be unhappy too. At a somewhat later stage the same feeling of revenge swayed him towards divorce, as he could then separate her from her son Serozha, whom she passionately loved. And thus the miserable man lacerated himself and his yet more miserable wife with the dilemma—either a divorce and lose your son, or no divorce and lose your lover: Serozha or Vronsky—choose! for both it cannot be. He now hated Anna with all the strength of his soul for the great wrong she had done him. And all the time it was self and the world that absorbed him, till Anna could not help seeing that his falsehood even exceeded her own; that he was all made up of social lies; that he was not a man, but a machine; that he



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positively swam in perjury. And still the situation dragged on; that which all hoped was transitory threatened to become permanent, eternal. But there are limits to human endurance.

It was the unfortunate creature Anna who broke down first. She had felt, for some time, a presentiment of coming death, which she had hailed as a welcome termination to an intolerable position. Imagining herself to be dying, she sent an urgent summons to her husband (who was from home), saying that she would die easier if she had his forgiveness. When he arrived he found Vronsky in the chamber of death, weeping. Moved by her sufferings and entreaties, Karénin gave Vronsky his hand, and forgave. "Thank the Lord!" said the dying woman, "now everything is right." Driven crazy by her approaching death, and by Karénin's wonderful magnanimity and forgiveness, Vronsky attempted his own life, and recovered from his wound only to find that Anna had marvellously recovered too; when, crushed by a sense of Karénin's splendid generosity, he resolved to go away forever, and no longer thrust himself between a repentant wife and a forgiving husband. That resolution was never carried out. Another change passed over Karénin.

Karénin became conscious of two forces now struggling for the control of his life; the one force holy and spiritual, exhibiting itself in love and generous feeling; the other brutal but all-powerful, ruling his life contrary to his reason and the needs of his soul; and he knew that this irresistible force would command him to push Anna over the precipice, and that he would obey. Once again he determined upon divorce; when, just as he was struggling with these

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complicated motives and passions, Anna took the matter into her own hands, declined the divorce, went abroad with Vronsky and the little girl who had been born to them, leaving Alekséi Aleksandrovitch Karénin alone with his son.

It is not necessary for us to follow the unhappy pair through their brief season of bliss to their long misery; nor to journey with them to Italy, where Vronsky, feeling the emptiness of his life, took to painting; to Vronsky's ancestral estates, where he took more and more to sports and improvements, giving less and less of his time to Anna; to St Petersburg and Moscow, where cruel difficulties and insults awaited them in view of the social ban. The prolonged course of moral deterioration began to tell heavily upon all concerned. Vronsky felt more and more the emptiness of a life devoid of all the professional and public interests which he had been obliged to relinquish; and, as a consequence, took up with more company, went out more, and left Anna more alone. Anna, for her part, was vexed by his public activities as by slights upon the sufficiency of her love; feared that she was losing his regard, whilst he feared he was losing his freedom; and that struggle began between the woman's passion for love and the man's desire for independence which ended only with death. It was the same conflict as with Karénin, only under different conditions. At last the shattering nerves could keep themselves quiet only with morphine. Moral decay visibly set in; and the Anna who was once so peerless and proud fell to unpleasant coquetries with young men. Even Karénin became unstrung and degenerate under the trials of his life. His fortitude gave way.

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He was no longer able to keep up an appearance of firmness and ease ; took to evangelical mysticism and spiritualism from the same feeling that took Anna to morphine ; lost his leading place in the Government, and became a mere tool in the hands of a neurotic woman who loved him with a platonic affection. Such was one portion of the ruin wrought by sin. See now how ruin overtakes the authors of the sin !

The relations between Vronsky and Anna were such as inevitably lead to misunderstandings. Not only was Anna vexed with Vronsky's public and social activities, but jealous of his relations to other women—and in each case her trouble arose from the same cause, viz., her desire to keep him to herself, to feel that her love was sufficient, knowing he had no other tie binding him to her. Scenes became more frequent between them. Her fears caused her to misinterpret his very looks, and the severe and stony expression on his face was something new to her. Her pride was great in making this imperious man bow before her, and she could not rest satisfied but she must make it absolute. At such times the real Anna of Vronsky's love seemed to disappear, to give place to a being whom he could not understand, and who seemed almost repulsive to him. Feeling that her irritability came from the uncertainty of her position, he tried to bring her to her senses, as her husband more than once had tried, and with as little success. Her unreason, uncontrollable humours, tempers, jealousies drove him away from her more and more, and compelled him to revise his former estimate of her character. And he deliberately adopted a tone of indifference and icy reserve which

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still further maddened Anna, and made her explanations impossible.

As for Anna, she was too terribly aware of what was impending, yet she seemed helpless to prevent it. She felt herself near to ruin every moment, and she feared—she feared for herself; but a spirit of evil seemed to drive her on. Vronsky caught an expression of strange hatred from under her veil; and she herself was filled with fear lest she should come to hate him as she had hated Karénin. A spirit of conflict loomed up between them, which neither had power to control. Reconciliations after scenes became more distant and more difficult; and at last a quarrel arose which would not be reconciled. It was at Moscow, where their life had been growing intolerable. She saw with terror the unconcealed expression of hate on his whole face, and especially in his fierce, cruel eyes; she saw that she was dashing to destruction, yet—spite of her vows and desire for reconciliation—she could not stop. Again, terrified, she saw in his eyes a cold, cruel judge condemning her; but she answered with a look which told him how impossible it was to think of reconciliation. All was over. Her mind was made up. She would die. She had a vague idea that her death would be the best way to punish him, to take vengeance on him. She told herself she never hated anybody as she hated this man. When she passed his hat in the ante-room she shivered with aversion. Yet she stole into the library to look on him as he lay asleep, and the yearning in her heart was, "Only to live! for I love him, and he loves me, and these dreadful days will go by!"

As she went to the railway station to leave him—

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going, she knew not where—to do, she knew not what—murmuring to herself, “It must be that I am going crazy!”—she remembered that her first meeting with Vronsky was at the railway station, and recalled the expression of his face, as of a submissive dog. And again hope and despair filled her tortured, cruelly-palpitating heart. She had entirely forgotten why she had come, and felt stupid amongst the people, the flashy young men who leered at her, the sounding bells. A dirty, hunchbacked porter passed close to the window, examining the car wheels; then suddenly she remembered her nightmare and was frightened. When she arrived at a station further on, where she hoped Vronsky would meet her, according to her last despairing letter, and found him not, “Where shall I fly?” she said to herself. She walked along the platform, stopping at the end. A truck rumbled by. Suddenly she remembered the man who was crushed to death the day she first met Vronsky, and she understood what remained for her to do. With light, swift steps she descended to the rails, and stood very near the train which was slowly passing by. She looked under the cars, at the chains and the brake, and the high iron wheels. She made the sign of the cross. With outstretched hands she threw herself on her knees beneath the carriage. She had time to be afraid. “Where am I? What am I doing? Why?”—trying to draw back. But the inflexible mass struck her on her head and threw her upon her back. “Lord, forgive me all,” she murmured, feeling the struggle to be in vain.

They carried her bleeding body into the barracks near by. Her head, with its heavy braids of hair and light curls gathered about the temples, was un-

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injured—leaning back with the eyes half closed. It was thus that Vronsky saw her when he rushed like a madman into the barracks, and beheld the strange, wild expression which yet lingered on the face, while the lips, slightly opened, seemed to utter again the terrible menace of their last interview, “that he would repent!”

It is not for man to judge her. Yet the words spoken by a sufferer may well stand for her epitaph and sum of mortal years—“She troubled the lives of two men of rare merit, and ruined herself.”

As for Vronsky, they carried him back from the barracks like one dead. For six weeks he spoke word to none, and could not be trusted alone lest he should destroy himself. He became almost insane. When he recovered, it was to say of himself, “As a man, I am only a ruin.” His face had grown old and worn and was like stone. He gave his last days to the cause of Servian independence, leading a squadron of cavalry against Turkey at his own expense. He lived in the service of the God of this World, and died in the service of the God of War.

The story of Anna Karénina does not end with this grim tragedy and solemn warning. Against the World and the God of this World, the great writer sets the Soul and the God in the Soul. Over against War and the God of War he sets Peace and the God of Peace within. Konstantin Levin, living his life of wholesome labour and family love, persevered in the search for Truth till all his weary Scepticisms passed away and his longing for Faith was satisfied. This man, who was, as his friends said, always thinking, always alone, always reading philosophical books,

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always sacrificing himself for others, at last attained the Great Peace. Amid the woods and meadows, the simple peasantry and the joys of labour with Nature, he learned that science cannot be substituted for religion, that there is no rest in Church and Orthodoxy, and that a man need not put himself to death in order to discover, or because he cannot discover, the meaning of his life. He saw that the man who lives for his Soul, who remembers God, who lives according to God, according to Truth—this man has Faith, this man has Peace. As he strode along the highway, he was filled with new impulses, new joys, insensible to weariness and heat. He turned into the wood to think it out, and stretched himself on the succulent wood-grass, under an aspen tree. He looked down to the earth-beetle crawling up the stalk of couch-grass; he looked up to the high, cloudless sky. He stopped thinking. He listened to the mysterious voices that seemed to wake joyfully in him. “To live for God, for the Soul!” “Is it really Faith?” he thought, fearing to believe in his happiness. Then he cried, “My God, I thank Thee!” and, swallowing down the sobs that arose, he brushed away with both hands the tears that filled his eyes.





I  
ANNA KARENINA

2  
THE INTERPRETATION: THE LORD'S  
VENGEANCE



# ANNA KARENINA

## THE INTERPRETATION: THE LORD'S VENGEANCE

"VENGEANCE is mine, I will repay."

This is the text selected by the preacher of one of the most stupendous sermons since the Epistle to the Romans. Like the Rabbi turned tent-maker, so the Count turned *muzhik* reasons of "righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come" till modern Felix trembles amid his luxurious vices. As the Jewish thunderer was dismissed till a more convenient season, ultimately going, a prisoner and martyr, to Rome, so the Russian witness-bearer would, long ago, have been consigned to Siberia by the outraged powers of this world, only that his hour is not yet come. And as the awful personality, "the prisoner of the Lord," lived on after Felix passed away from the scene of his vicious procrastinations—lived on to confront a Festus and an Agrippa and a Bernice with the same tremendous moral imperatives, and to have the sinners escape their terrors only by charging madness upon the prophet; so the spirit of the excommunicated and all-but exiled Tolstoy outlives the threatening and trembling powers, bearing such testimony against wealth and vice and tyranny as will—even while

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they deride it as the spirit of a madman—be their doom.

Living for the World and the Flesh is, this preacher affirms, the great wrong. Like all the great teachers, he recognises the fearful power of the cosmos over the mind, and of the body over the soul, the possibility of the soul's bondage, but the possibility also of its final deliverance. All the masters of the soul, from Moses to Wesley, have lifted themselves upon the awful facts of what they called "sin," and put a "sense of sin" foremost amongst redemptive influences. With a style and language of his own, this latest in the grand line of evangelists insists that subservience of the soul to the world and the flesh is the root evil. Even when physical conditions appear to predetermine vice—on the evidence of neurotic excitements and hysterical emotions, and the inability of wrong-doers, amid all their self-reproach, to conquer their physical repulsion from certain persons whom, nevertheless, duty tells them to love, or to suppress their physical attraction for other persons duty warns them to avoid—even then the soul is master of its fate and is to be held guilty. Like the preacher in the Letter to the Romans, the evil-doer may "find a law that, when he would do good, evil is present with him," may "see another law in his members warring against the law of his mind, and bringing him into captivity to the law of sin which is in his members"; he may set this forth in modern phraseologies about a double personality—"I am always the same, but there is another being within me whom I fear; it is she who loved him, *him*, and hated you" — but

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the device avails nought in the presence of the prophet who stands for the spiritual basis of life and morality. It is always possible to escape from "Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde" to the God within.

Love and Marriage, pursues the preacher, constitute the supreme test of character, showing whether life is lived for the world and the flesh, or for God and the soul. Wherever womanhood is made to subserve sense and pleasure, there, clearly, the choice of the lower has been made; character has broken down under the supreme test. Not only should love be considered impossible outside marriage, but marriage should minister to the growth of the soul rather than the gratification of the senses. The fleshly lover may declare that "if there are as many opinions as there are heads, then there are as many ways of loving as there are hearts"; the faithless husband may swear that home and wife are still sacred in his eyes; even the legend of Jesus and the Woman taken in Adultery may be hypocritically quoted in excuse of mixed lovers; but these are obvious tricks of mind to palliate offences against morals. The world still goes on condoning the flesh, holding only that a man is ridiculous when hopelessly in love with a young girl or unmarried woman, not that he is wicked when he makes love to a married woman. This is the state—the grossest, openest, and most palpable—in which Flesh is elevated above Love and Marriage.

There is another state, however, less offensive to the æsthetic faculties, but not less disastrous to character—the state in which the World is set above Love and Marriage, in which Womanhood is subordinated to the World. A large part of the mighty

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discourse is taken up with the exposition of this less obvious and less pondered evil. Girls who cannot make a choice, who can only answer "yes" or "no," may be forced by designing relatives into loveless union with men of rank and fashion, or they may willingly purchase the world by the surrender of their bodies. Men, for their part, may seek marriage merely as a means of material happiness, resenting its petty tribulations, shirking its graver obligations; or they may choose it as a social convenience, setting them free for a career—making it a stalking-horse for their ambition. In this latter case—when men take a wife for the sake of the world—the necessity of choosing between wife and world soon arises, and the first, inevitably, is sacrificed to the second. Affection for wife and child is buried deep in the box of formality. There is no disposition for the tenderness which endears, or the communion which sanctifies, married life. The ambitious worldling has scarce time even to speak to his wife. He is anxious only to avoid all domestic entanglements in a wise, correct fashion, honourable to himself, pursuing his own active, useful, aspiring career. His sole aim is to preserve his reputation, and suffer no interruption of his official duties. If he professes lofty views of religion, civilisation, politics, his underlying impulse is merely the desire of advancement, the craze for success. Everything is means to that end. The world takes precedence of the woman; ambition freezes love; utility regulates marriage.

The wise preacher takes us, it will be perceived, far from the region of vulgar vice into the almost trackless realms of spiritual error. The worldling may be a most virtuous person, but his virtue, like his

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marriage, is only a means to an end. His ideas of conjugal morality are the veriest pedantry. He delivers pedantic moral discourses to a wife tempted and suffering; writes official letters to warn and admonish her; deals with her as an Under-Secretary of State, so that she is unable to believe in his magnanimity, and afraid to appeal to a generosity she never saw in him. He is right, she echoes; of course he is right—he is always right—but his very rectitude seems more cruel than murder. People say he is a Christian, a religious, moral, upright, honourable, intellectual man; but he crushes all that is vital in her. She cannot explain it, but to her he is a low, vile man. "Go away, go away!" she exclaims, "you are too perfect!" The ambitious worldling stands revealed as the moral pedant. His stupidity before problems of the heart and soul is phenomenal; he is a man blind and without fingers in a dissecting-room; in the word of a clever woman, he is "a blockhead."

The psychology of the pedantic worldling was an unexplored region, but it is here mapped out with ruthless pertinacity. He is a pharisee who sacrifices the realities of the soul to the formalities of the world, and substitutes official routine for the incomprehensible grandeur of ethical law. Careless of her spirit's weal, he is willing to accept an official virtue in a wife; is more anxious to keep her formally above suspicion than to preserve her from actual fall; and thinks that keeping up appearances is the same as preserving his honour. The *status quo* is so admirable on all sides that he has no difficulty in conjuring up from the high sphere of religion arguments to confirm the dictates of policy. Across

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the abyss of the actual, yawning even in the hideous shape of domestic infidelity, he is willing to throw the bridge of the artificial, and is astonished only that a writhing human spirit refuses to be conformed to his social hypocrisies. He is utterly incapable of understanding the cruelty and selfishness of his requirements, or that a husband—committing fornication with the powers of this world—may be a greater and less curable evil-doer than the unfortunate wife whose adulteries are those of the flesh. Our judgment goes with the sinner after the flesh when she exclaims that this sinner after the spirit is not a man but a machine, made up of lies, positively swimming in perjury, setting falsehood and conventionality above everything human and divine, living by that which even a wicked and lost woman cannot endure—liar that he is! And we cannot escape the conclusion driven home upon our minds by this tremendous discourse—the conclusion that to live for the world and the flesh is the great transgression, but that they who live for the world fall into the more awful condemnation because the more hopeless delusion. The conclusion is as old as Jesus—the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom before the Scribes and Pharisees—but it is good for a modern age, swallowed of wealth and convention, to be called back to veracity by a preacher whose word is unerring as the lightning and commanding as the thunder. “*Vengeance is mine, I will repay!*”

The ethical instinct, without which any preacher is merely a sounding brass and tinkling cymbal, leads the author of *Anna Karénina* to show, in the next place, that the World and the Flesh, being trans-



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gressors, have no power to put themselves right. If we speak of these—the world and the flesh—as one, as forming a composite thing to be spoken of in the singular number, we shall simplify our words, and hardly wrong the preacher, in whose mind they are inseparable, if not absolutely identical. And that world and flesh have no fount of healing within themselves is evident from the fact that their mood is frequently one of great good-nature and self-satisfaction. Pleasant dispositions often go with foul morals; healthy bodies with rotten souls; happy minds with unwholesome spirits. The epicure has a keen instinct for pleasure; is adroit at avoiding quarrels, clever at gaining popularity, skilful to get credit for qualities he does not possess, and quite wonderful in his ability to pose for the sentiment appropriate to every social circumstance; so that he is frequently a universal favourite.

Sometimes the worldling's opulent egotism expands into positive mirthfulness in the presence of wickedness. Not only does he find his vices pleasant in the act, but amusing in reminiscence of the escapades, predicaments, and by-play connected with them. From the discovered immorality and consequent misery of other wrong-doers he extracts much merriment. The abasement of false wives and the anguish of deceived husbands add vastly to the amusement of diners and club-loiterers. The world of adultery is, to them, not at all iniquitous, but only ridiculous. They reveal this in their veiled looks of amusement, the half-concealed hilarity with which they inquire for the health of squirming sufferers, their sensual gloating—as if they were all going to a wedding. Because they find merriment in sin, there-

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fore the world and the flesh have no power to deliver themselves.

Sometimes, to be sure, the world and the flesh experience a kind of sorrow—the sorrow which, in the words of an earlier apostle, “worketh death.” Unpleasant circumstances emerge from self-indulgence, such as bills of cost, rupture of domestic relations, the sense of having made a fool of oneself, of having managed stupidly, of being found out, which substitute self-reproach for the usual vast content. But even when it regrets, the carnal world never repents. In the person of its devotee it may even put itself to death on account of the hopeless discomfort and entanglement it has brought upon itself; but in killing itself it has no desire to kill the wrong: it is the egotist even in death. Therefore, because they can regret but never repent, the world and the flesh have in themselves no means of betterment.

The same moral bankruptcy displays itself in the fact that the world and the flesh have no higher standard than themselves, and are compelled to acquiesce in the circumstances which produce guilt and calamity. Whilst the true man looks with disgust upon his life, trembles and mourns bitterly, the light-of-love, being also light-of-heart, gaily replies that the world is thus constituted, and asks, What can you do? It would be incorrect to say he has no principles; but they are immoral ones, or, at best, pure expediencies. He divides society into two classes: the first composed of old-fashioned, dull, stupid, vulgar, and, above all, ridiculous people, who declare that girls should be modest, women chaste, men brave, temperate, faithful to one wedded wife,

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careful to bring up their children, earn their bread, pay their debts, and other absurdities; the second consisting of superior beings who must, above all things, be elegant, gay, extravagant, luxurious, vicious, admired, flattered, and scornful of all the rest. He is an honourable man, with a very strict code of honour—a code which seldom fails in its application, which requires him to pay his gambling debts (but not his tailor's bills), forbids him to tell lies (except to women), or deceive anybody (except husbands), or pardon insults (but inflict many). He is governed, not by laws, but by rules; not by virtue, but by convention; not by religion, but by the usages of fast society; not by divinity, but by the god of Things-as-they-are. Hence, concludes the preacher—his words as goads fastened in a sure place—the world and the flesh have no curative powers in themselves.

The terrible feeling of inward destitution compels, at length, those men of the world who are not epicures or sensualists to try what help may be for them and for society in the improvement of machinery and the reform of institutions. If it be nothing more than an improved plough, the liberal reformer hopes that it will, somehow, react from agriculture upon social ethics. Official philanthropies are set agoing—with as much hope of success as pills for dead consciences and powders for broken hearts. But the great hope of the world's best man is in the establishment of liberal institutions, such as schools, franchises, women's rights, free newspapers, constitutional government, local autonomies, and so forth;—not seeing that civilisation is not morality, is not even happiness; not understanding that these things, in so far as they are mere externals, touching the outside

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of man, cannot change his character, cannot make him good, unselfish, happy. It pleases the tolerant liberalist to glorify popular majorities, to haze his brain with theories and cigars, to write and read the liberal reviews while the *muzhiks* cut the corn, to fool himself and the people with superficial nostrums which touch not even the economic sore, much less the ethical disease; but when the revolutionist arises with dynamite and dagger to get some of these things done, the unfortunate liberalist roars for the hangman as lustily as the rest. The world and the flesh—the great materialisms—cannot be saved by materialisms like themselves. The evil is in the soul, which cannot be cured by sticking-plaster. Much nearer the truth come the peasants with their childish fatalism—harbinger at least of faith—"It will come out all right—what God will give!" "Vengeance is *mine*, I will repay!"

Thus we approach the third head of this colossal sermon—that since the world and the flesh constitute the great transgression, and since they have no healing energies within themselves, therefore the world and the flesh come into condemnation and incur the divine vengeance. The form of vengeance immediately repaid is misery; and there are as many forms of misery as there are forms of sin. The happiness of all good people is the same, but every bad person is unhappy after a fashion of his own. Even those who repent and confess cannot wholly escape; for whilst they may cheat the official confessional of a materialised church, they will come up before the tribunal of—let us say—a wife's dove-like purity, and feel their souls scathed by her falling tears as by drops of liquid hell.

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As for those who continue to tread the "primrose path of dalliance," they are taught in the terrible parable of Anna Karénina that the "way of transgressors is hard." Feelings of shame take the place of ecstasies; fear of dishonour supplants the joy of dalliance; disgust at last swallows up desire; and despair settles over all. To discover that she has taken her hair in her hands and is pulling it, is a sure sign that a woman's happiness is ruined. To have her sense of loss in husband, child, home dragged from her in the words, "All is over for me, all is lost," betokens social ruin. And when her companion in guilt moans out, "As a man, I am only a ruin," we get proof of that decay which overtakes even the physical nature as the result of sexual sin. The remorseless preacher who sets these facts forth in the scenes of this titanic parable has surely studied in the same awful school of Nature and Law as he studied in who said, "When lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."

That catastrophic point is, however, not reached in a step. Many admonitory miseries lie between—like barbed wires and prickly thorns on the side of the precipice, crying, "Back! back! this way lie danger and death!" These being disregarded, the course of false love is an ever-accelerating downgrade and an ever-accumulating misery. False lovers will be given over more and more to a spirit of falsehood necessitated by the thousand and one complications involved in a secret and unlawful correspondence. Even if falsehood and lying be opposed to their natures, nothing but falsehood and lies can come out of the situation. They must weave

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around themselves an unbroken web of dissimulation, and must practise a thousand stratagems to conceal their guilt. A sense of hypocrisy will pervade their intercourse with all innocent people, and can be counteracted only by a habit of assurance so calm and impudence so natural as to astonish themselves. They will be dominated by a very demon of untruth; will feel themselves sustained and lifted up as by some invisible power and clad in an impenetrable armour of falsehood.

The habit of lying brings with it a growing shamelessness. The woman who, years ago, would have exclaimed, "What! sin with you? sin secretly with you? sin openly with you? elope with you and lose everything? elope with you and confess myself openly your mistress?"—that woman will live to do, in distinct succession, every one of these very things. She will live to invite her lover openly to her husband's house, to refuse the divorce she once desired, to go away with her paramour in perfect happiness, without suffering and without shame. For it is the tendency of false love to completely absorb the life; throwing the lovers more and more upon each other as society withdraws; driving the man to choose between the world and the flesh, and to abandon lucrative or ambitious pursuits in a vain attempt, by a frenzy of devotion, to fill the ever-expanding void in his mistress's soul; finally uniting their fate by the infernal tie of unlawful parenthood. On the heels of open shamelessness other forms of wickedness follow quickly. By an unavoidable revulsion they will determine upon lust without parenthood, in order to have no barriers to their companionship. Chastity abandoned, coquetry takes its place, and the once

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modest wife degenerates into a universal flirt and decoy. Finally, the jarred nerves and disordered mind can be kept quiet only by increasing doses of alcohol or morphine—a premonition of coming doom—an incipient suicide—the shadow of certain death.

The darker decrees of retribution are written in the manifest destruction of every form of true love, as degenerate love more and more absorbs the life. The false wife will find love and pity for her husband gradually supplanted by aversion and fear, and at last by feelings of positive hate and scorn. The trivial defects and weaknesses, which only more endear him to the true wife, will irritate and estrange the heart which is turning false—"Ugh! why are his ears so long? Don't crack your knuckles that way, I detest it!" So, at last, though after longer time, with the false mother and her child. The shadow of the detested husband falls upon his offspring, and the mother begins to experience feelings of disillusionment, to see the imp in the tiny creature she once thought a cherub. With a banquet of love before her, she commences to die of starvation. The child is in the way with his presence, like a shadow, and his inquisitive face. He, in his turn, feels the change of tone, and is puzzled in his small mind, troubled in the clear waters of his little life, robbed of the birth-right of childhood. After desertion of her child, the undying mother-love may revive in pangs, stolen visits, sad farewells, but her blighted lips cannot kiss the bloom on to his young life again. And thus does our great modern preacher enforce the ancient law that "the sins of the fathers (and still more of the mothers) are visited upon their children."

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Nor is this all; for the avenging Nemesis has decreed that the false love shall, after trial, follow the true love into the lake of consuming fire. Apples of Eden turn to apples of Sodom in the very mouth. Satiety takes the place of ecstasy, estrangement of dalliance, disgust of desire. The common saw is reversed—it is the course of *false* love which never did run smooth. Love passages decrease, whilst “scenes” increase. Torn by irreconcilable contradictions, fearing the uncertainty of her position, the woman is racked by jealousies; whilst the man begins to be bored by an alliance which interferes with his activities, sports, liberties; until the countenance, which, at the beginning, had been that of a submissive dog, wears a studied aspect of frigid indifference. To her hot jealousy he opposes an icy reserve. A spirit of cruelty holds him back, whilst a spirit of conflict drives her on. She feels she is near to ruin—is dashing to destruction—and is afraid, but she cannot stop. “These dreadful days will go by,” she promises herself, as she looks at him asleep, murmuring also, “for I love him, and he loves me”; but when he wakes she shivers with aversion; his very hat hanging in the hall irritates her. ’Tis thus that the love of the flesh turns to hate of the fleshly lover—feelings of hate, looks of hate, words of hate, and finally acts of hate—the railway and the carriage wheel for her, war and the field of death for him. All is over. The death of the body is the fitting sequel to the death of the soul. ’Tis thus that the great voice from Russia shakes the modern world of degenerate Christianity as the voice from Tarsus shook the ancient world of decaying Paganism. He that soweth to the flesh shall, of the flesh, reap corruption.



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The wages of sin is death. Be not deceived. God is not mocked. Vengeance *is* mine, I *will* repay!

It would be as great a mistake to suppose that this terrific delineation represented the ultimate truth of the preacher in *Anna Karénina*, as that the first chapter of his Letter contained the whole message of the preacher to the Romans. For just as *Romans* commences with an analysis of sin, and pursues its way through human experience to a gospel of salvation, so *Anna Karénina* tracks the doom of the world and the flesh only to announce the glorious gospel of God and the Soul. As Paul put a saved Abraham over against lost Jew and condemned Gentile, so Tolstoy sets the typical regenerated worker and truth-seeker in contrast with his types of trespass and vengeance. Here is a man who flees from corrupt society to the pure scenes of Nature, and immediately feels himself a better creature; a man who turns away from vain speculation to honest labour, mows hay with the peasants whilst the speculator thumbs the reviews and solves chess problems by the help of iced lemonade, mingles solicitude for the health of his horses and the maternal happiness of his cows with interest in his servants and day-labourers—yes, and with honest love for homely wife and children. Here is presented the labour-cure for soul-trouble, and even for cob-webs on the brain. To co-operate with Nature and God in the development of the earth is to enter into a life that is sweet, pure, wholesome, delightful, and truly religious; for it unites a man with the simple labourers, his brothers, and with God, his Father. Under these healthful conditions the life grows

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further and further away from the world and the flesh towards God and the Soul; even from the intellect and the brain towards the spirit and the heart. The questions of life and death, of seen and unseen, of God and Eternity, are found to be—not so much intellectual and speculative, as moral and practical. Clear and beautiful sounds this note through the discourse—do the will, and you shall know the teaching! Thus the disciple passes from flesh to faith, from the world without to the God within, from turmoil to peace—a peace which passeth all understanding, even his own.

II

THE KREUTZER SONATA

I

A PARABLE OF SENSUAL LOVE,  
COURTSHIP, AND MARRIAGE



# THE KREUTZER SONATA

## A PARABLE OF SENSUAL LOVE, COURTSHIP, AND MARRIAGE

HERE is the story of a man and a woman—Pozdnischeff and his wife—who loved according to the World, courted according to the Flesh, and married according to the Devil. And as heavenly music, like heavenly love, may be pressed into the service of the Hadean Trinity, the writer has woven the tale round a typical composition, and called it *The Kreutzer Sonata*.

The story is told in a railway train, in which four passengers had passed two weary days and a night—a mannish lady, no longer young, much given to smoking—a talkative man, a lawyer, on terms of conversational intimacy with the lady-smoker—another gentleman, short, nervous, not old, but prematurely grey, who avoided intercourse, spending his time in reading, smoking, or making tea, which he drew forth, with other provisions, from a canvas bag; who had a way of emitting, from time to time, peculiar sounds resembling short coughs, or laughter just begun and suddenly broken off—and, last of all, the writer.

Amongst other passengers continually coming in and going out chanced to be a tall old merchant, who fell

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to recounting tales of drinking-bouts, pranks, wild escapades, and other reminiscences of the fairs when he was young, pouring them into the ear of a young clerk, who roared with laughter till his voice resounded from one end of the carriage to the other. The lawyer and the lady-smoker were, at the same time, keeping up a lively discussion about a wife who had informed her husband she would not live with him any longer; and presently the lawyer skilfully drew the old merchant into the debate, which then broadened out into the higher education of women, frequency of divorce, freedom of women's choice, and the marriage question in general. The young clerk discreetly waited to come in on the winning side. The lady-smoker imagined herself free to launch out into wholesale eulogies of sentiment, romantic attachments, and the love that hallows marriage, till all were startled by the sudden intervention of the grey-haired lonely man with the lustrous eyes, who—excited, red-faced, facial muscles nervously twitching, emitting that peculiar snort as between suppressed laughter and a choking sob—wanted to know what she meant by the love that hallows marriage. During the debate which followed, the lady-smoker vehemently maintained the sufficiency of the romantic sentiments to regulate marriage, descanting volubly on identity of ideals, sacramental views, and so on; whilst the grey man—eyes now like burning coals—demanded facts, not novels, professed scepticism of the reality and wearing power of the romantic sentiments, declared that such unions merely precipitated men and women into hells of hate from which they escaped only by killing themselves or each other, and wound up by avowing himself to be that Pozdnischeff

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whose trial for the murder of his wife had recently created such a sensation. Shortly after this disconcerting *dénouement*, the lawyer and the lady-smoker contrived to arrange matters with the guard, exchanged carriages, and left Pozdnischeff alone with the writer, to whom—after preliminary apologies and drinkings of strong tea, amid the darkness of the long night, his impressive and agreeable voice mingling with the creaking and rattle of the train, interrupted only by that peculiar sound of his as between a sob and a laugh—he explained how that same romantic love they so glibly praised had led him to kill his wife, and told this

### STORY OF THE KREUTZER SONATA.

“ I am a landowner, a University graduate, and was at one time Marshal of the Nobility. Before marriage, I lived like other men in our social stratum, definitely parting with my boyish innocence at the age of sixteen, being bound to women thenceforward by a tie financial only, but not moral. This way of life—approved by the general consent of all classes, countenanced by the Government, and even recommended by our medical advisers—I followed till I was thirty, when I decided to marry. I never doubted that it would be possible for me to live the happiest, most ideal, family life; or that I was entitled to select the purest young girl imaginable. The young lady I chose for the honour of becoming my wife was the daughter of a once wealthy, but now ruined, landowner; and one evening, when we had been out rowing, her bewitching curls, well-shaped figure, and nice-fitting jersey suddenly convinced me that this was the woman to wed. I thought it my duty, how-

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ever, and also a wise precaution, to give her some glimpse into my past life, which I did by means of my diary; and was very much astonished that she should have felt any horror, or desired to break off our relations. To me, as to society, it had all seemed so right. I had seen the gilded youths—spruce, washed, shaven, in spotless linen and faultless uniform, souls burdened with a hundred crimes—tolerated in every *salon* and ballroom. I did not understand that—with their costumes, perfumes, exposures, glittering ornaments, dances, and so forth—the fashionable and the fallen women were playing for exactly the same end—that is to say, the seduction of men; and that it was with this very object in view that successive generations of initiated mothers were bringing up their deceived daughters. I did not know that the marriage-trap was baited by fleshly displays, so that men might be enslaved through their senses. However, in spite of her horror at my past life, the girl agreed to become my wife, and the engagement went on.

“I need not say anything about our courtship—a time barren of all interest or spiritual intimacy; or the church ceremonies—which I regarded merely as the forms necessary to entitle me to take possession of a certain woman; or the honeymoon—an inconceivably wearisome and disgusting episode which I can compare to nothing but my earlier attempts to master the art of smoking. I then saw that the social arrangements—Oh, abomination! Oh, damnable lie!—were deliberately made with the view of inflaming, not restraining, the passions, and that the wedding tour was merely a licence to unlimited pleasure.



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“ It was in the midst of this insufferable tediousness and torture that our first quarrel occurred. On the third or fourth day after our marriage, finding my wife bored, and inquiring the cause, she murmured something about feeling lonely without her mother; and as I fell to comforting her without reference to her mother, she took offence, upon which I rebuked her for capriciousness; when she fell to upbraiding me with the most spiteful words, and with every expression of coldness, even hatred, on her countenance. Seized with horror, I endeavoured to soothe her, but found myself face to face with such a wall of impregnable, cold, venomous hostility, that I was lashed into a state of extreme irritation, and we addressed a number of unpleasant remarks to each other. Neither of us was yet able to understand that this depression and irritation were due simply to the nature of our married intercourse, and the consequent state of our nerves.

“ This first quarrel, however, was quickly followed by the second, third, fourth, and a constant succession; until I saw that this was not accident but necessity, the result of the abyss that yawned between us, and that it must occur again and again. Always I read in her eyes the same cruel, cold hostility. I had sometimes quarrelled with my father and brother, but never had I known the peculiarly bitter hatred that subsisted between my wife and me. At that time I did not know that this was the common lot; that ninety-nine per cent. of married people were plunged into just such a hell, though they all tried to hide it from each other, and even from themselves. Neither had I realised that the mutual malignity which characterised our relations was the

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revolt of human nature against the animal nature that was crushing it in both of us. Necessarily, therefore, our difference grew in intensity and savageness, the insufficiency of our pretexts for quarrelling being quite as remarkable as our pretences of reconciliation. I had not remarked that these periods of hatred corresponded with other periods of what we called 'love'—a time of vehement 'love' being invariably followed by one of as vehement hate, showing that they were simply opposite poles of one and the same animal feeling. As our quarrelling was the result of the animal conception that underlay our married relations, so also our reconciliations were due to this; whence it would happen that, even whilst launching the most bitter and venomous reproaches at each other, we would fall into a period of silence, filled up with smiles, kisses, embraces.

"Thus it went on with us for some years, during which six children were born, aggravating our misery. I then detected the astonishing lies people have told about children with the view of hiding their family wretchedness. I discovered that children are a torment, and nothing more, giving the mother far more suffering than happiness, and—what with their diseases, conflicting methods of treatment, the humbugging of the doctors, contentions about their education, the partizanship of the older ones in the quarrels of their parents—leading both father and mother a dog's life, and turning the home into a hell on earth.

"I found also that motherhood only aggravated the differences between my wife and myself. How can it be otherwise when—contrary to all the laws of nature,

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and the example of the lower animals, a woman has no freedom of her own body, and is compelled at one and the same time to be the nurse of her offspring and the mistress of her husband? How otherwise when the scoundrelly doctors assist in the suppression of nature by forbidding now suckling, and again child-bearing, thus encouraging bad, irregular lives, which they try to correct, not by better living, but by more medicines, more doctors, and always worse health! I see now that the only remedy is a fundamental change in man's conception of the position of woman; that he must cease to regard her as an object of pleasure, to degrade her into the slave of his senses. Until this comes about, the great art of her life will consist in captivating men—the maiden, in order to have as many as possible to choose from—the married woman, in order to strengthen her ascendancy over her husband. It is from this slavery to man's senses that 'nerves,' 'hysteria,' 'possession,' and what not arise; so that the life of fearful misery we led was the direct physical consequence of the animal ideas that regulated our intercourse. This is the reason why so many married people kill each other, or blow out their own brains.

"During the whole course of our wedded life, I never enjoyed a moment's relief from the maddening pangs of that jealousy which is the common lot of all husbands who live with their wives as I did with mine. After the birth of our first child, those torments grew excruciating; for my wife was forbidden by the villainous doctors to nurse her child, and suddenly developed that coquettishness which had previously lain dormant in her. I concluded

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that the woman who could thus lightly set at naught the moral obligations of a mother, might with equal facility trample upon the duties of a wife. The catastrophe, however, was averted for a long time, by the fact that my wife insisted on nursing the next five children herself, with the happiest results to her own health; and this child-bearing and child-nursing were the only things that contributed to the alleviation of my jealous pangs.

"In this manner we continued to live, our relations growing more and more hostile, until it became worse than if mere difference of view engendered enmity; it was settled enmity that produced difference of view. We always dissented from each other in advance, and held to our own opinions about the most matter-of-fact subjects. Skirmishes and expressions of hatred were called forth by the slightest step beyond our prescribed circle of conversational topics, so that we were reduced to silence, or such conversation as the very brutes have means of carrying on. For myself I can say that I was boiling with hatred towards her. I hated her every gesture and grimace—as when she poured out tea, or lifted the spoon to her mouth, or smacked her lips—just as if she had committed a really bad action. We poisoned each other's lives. We were like prisoners chained together, and hating each other—'I wish you were dead like a dog! . . . I am a liar, then, I suppose? . . . Children, here's your father beat-me! . . . Don't tell lies! . . . The devil speed you!' And thus it went on.

"What fools they are who say I murdered my wife with a knife on the fifth of October! The fact

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is, I killed her long before, just as they are all killing their wives at this moment—all, aye, all of them!

"But just when we had rendered each other's life unbearable, it became necessary, in the interests of the children's education, to remove from the country to the city; which had this advantage—that though its continual round of social duties and its constant succession of celebrities were a hollow sham, it enabled us to breathe more freely, to grow less susceptible to the sufferings caused by our daily intercourse.

"But just here those rascally doctors stepped in once more, forbidding my wife to become a mother again, and providing her with the means of executing their will, which, though to me an abomination, was to her law. Only country-girls throw their children into ponds; guided by the doctors, society women manage to kill their children decently, respectably, and with the approbation of all well-bred people. Now the effect of this course of conduct upon my wife was to improve her appearance, and make her more attractive than ever—like the last mellow beauty of the summer—so that whenever she passed she was sure to magnetise the men, to make them look at her. She resembled a well-fed wanton horse from whom the harness had suddenly been removed. She had that provoking, perturbing kind of beauty which characterises a good-looking woman of thirty. I saw her—a pretty woman without a curb. And I was seized with horror. Yes, she seemed to have awakened to the fact that there was a whole God's world full of joys she had forgotten, and must not let slip; for time was flying, and it would soon be too late. It was impossible

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for her to feel otherwise ; for all her education had been directed to persuading her that the one thing worthy of attention in all the world was the thing called 'love,' and since love with a husband had been rendered odious by jealousy and hate, she began to dream of another 'love,' and to look about her as with vague expectation of something. Her former concern for her children was now supplanted by extreme solicitude for her personal appearance, and for the accomplishments which would render her attractive, so that she began to again practise the piano, on which she had formerly played with a certain technical skill. This was the beginning of the catastrophe. It became necessary to engage a teacher ; and it was then that—that—(pardon this exhibition !)—that individual appeared on the scene.

"He really was a vile fellow ; but the fact that he was such a sorry character only shows how irresponsible my wife truly was. Had it not been this creature it would have been another. It was necessary that this thing should come to pass. Trook-hatschevsky—for that was the miserable creature's name—was a violinist, partly professional, partly fashionable amateur, whose father and mine had been neighbours, and who, on his return to Russia, called on me. He had almond-shaped, humid eyes, rosy smiling lips, waxed moustaches, hair dressed in the latest fashion, and had adopted all those Parisian tricks of dress which catch the eyes of a woman and predispose her in favour of the wearer. He was of weak build, and his face was of that agreeably insipid kind which women call 'not bad-looking.' This was the vile creature who, with his music, was the cause of all that followed.

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"And yet I don't know why I should say that, for though the trial proceeded on the hypothesis that I had killed my wife from jealousy, to avenge my outraged honour, for which reason I was acquitted, the truth is that her relations with the fiddler mattered very little to me or her either. What did matter was all that I have related to you—that yawning, bottomless gulf of hatred which divided us. Our quarrels had grown more frequent and far more savage—alternating, as of old, with bursts of headlong animal appetite. I was several times on the point of committing suicide, and my wife had more than once attempted to poison herself. Then I would run away, I thought, emigrate to America, and applied for a foreign passport. After some terrible scenes my wife fled to her sister's, returned, and drank a bottle of opium, after which we had a 'reconciliation' which in turn led to new and added exasperations. Scenes like these occurred once a month, now once a week, now every day. Always the same old story of contradictions, taunts, retorts, denunciations, curses, screams, hysterics! No variation! No novelty!

"Well, this was the sort of life we led when this man Trookhatschevsky made his appearance. I had always disliked the fellow, but some strange, fatal force—I can't tell what—perhaps to try to deceive myself, perhaps to prove I was not afraid—perhaps to counterbalance the desire I felt to kill him on the spot; anyhow, though I suffered horribly, seeing quite well what would happen, that he must conquer her completely, and though my wife, poor thing, frightened for herself, declined—I insisted that he must come to supper, plied him with expensive wines, expatiated on his musical talents, beamed upon him

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with an expansive, affectionate smile. . . . My wife was a bit of a musician . . . . he must come to dinner next Sunday and play with her! So began the game of deception all round. I smiled graciously, and pretended to look on with delight—my wife tried with all her might to look indifferent—and Trookhatschevsky appeared to be exclusively interested in the topic under discussion or the piece played.

“Three or four days after this, on returning home from the Exhibition, I suddenly felt my heart grow like stone within me at sight of his great-coat—you know, a fashionable great-coat—hanging up in the ante-chamber. The door of the drawing-room was open, and I could hear the sound of her voice and his, and the measured *arpeggio* that was evidently evoked merely for the purpose of drowning their words—their kisses, perhaps! Good God! What a wild beast was roused up within me! I quickly threw open the door. ‘I am so glad you have come,’ she said. He shook me by the hand, and inquired whether they should play simple pieces next Sunday, or one of Beethoven’s sonatas. All looked simple and true; yet I was convinced they were concerting measures to play me false. I, for my part, was unable to speak. I resembled a bottle held upside down, from which the liquid is unable to escape, owing to the bottle being too full. I wanted to load them with reproaches, to expel him from the house; but in proportion as my mental sufferings grew more acute, so did my manner increase in cordiality; and, remarking that I had perfect confidence in his taste, and advising my wife to have the same, I accompanied him with marked obsequiousness to the ante-chamber, and pressed with unwonted warmth his soft white hand.



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"All that day I did not speak to my wife, and when, in the evening, she sought me in my study, there was a terrible quarrel. For the first time I felt an uncontrollable desire to give physical expression to the hate which filled my being. 'Leave me, or I'll kill you!' I screamed. Seizing the *presse-papier* that lay on the table, and screaming once more, 'Leave me!' I dashed it on the ground close to where she stood. While she stood in the door, still looking at me, I snatched up various articles—the candle-stick, the ink-bottle—and flung them to the ground, continuing to cry, 'Leave me! take yourself off! I cannot answer for what I may do!' She left, and I instantaneously ceased. An hour afterwards the nurse summoned me to her chamber, where I found her in violent hysterics, really ill; but towards morning she grew calm, and we wound up the incident in the usual way—under the influence of the feeling we called 'love.' I confessed my jealousy to her, at which she laughed in the most sincere way, and declared that she had too much pride to think the fiddler could be dangerous. But everything was against her, poor thing—especially that accursed music. Next Sunday the guests gathered together, and the two performed again.

"They played the Kreutzer Sonata of Beethoven. Do you know the first *presto*? Eh? Ah! it is a strange piece of music, that sonata, especially the first part. One terrible effect of music is that it irritates the soul. It is a terrible weapon in the hands of, say, an immoral person. Take the Kreutzer Sonata, for instance. I do not speak of the traditional *andante*, with its commonplace variations and weak finale, but the first part of it, the

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*presto*; and I say that it revealed new feelings to me, unfolded new possibilities, but without telling me how to realise them.

"That night, Trookhatschevsky appeared to take a final leave of us, and two days afterwards I departed for the country.

"Two days after my arrival in the interior I received a letter from my wife, the fag-end of which informed me, as if it were the most trivial circumstance, that Trookhatschevsky had called again; and once more the furious wild beast of jealousy roared within his den. I went to bed and slept; but woke with something of an electric shock, my mind full of my wife and Trookhatschevsky. I recalled the passionate, sensuous, lust-provoking music, her tender, blissful smiles, her flushed face; but tried to persuade myself that it was absurd to suspect the hired fiddler and so respectable a woman as my wife. At five o'clock I was out of bed, calling for the horses; and at eight was driving off in the canvas-covered wagon. I had to drive thirty miles, and then spend eight hours on the railway. I cannot describe the horrors of the journey—I was like a wild beast in a cage. . . . Oh! how I fear . . . how I fear these railway carriages . . . they fill me with dread! . . . I thought of getting out on the line and letting the train pass over me; but felt I could not leave her behind, for my hatred was terrible. Memory is a blank. It was madness pure and simple. I knew only that something was impending.

"Owing to the breakdown of the wagon, it was midnight, instead of afternoon, when we reached Moscow. I drove up to the door. Lights were burning in our rooms. I rang the bell, and the door

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was opened by George the lackey. Just what I thought! The first thing I saw was the great-coat hanging from the clothes-rack. 'Who is here, George?' 'Trookhatschevsky.' 'Anyone else?' 'No; no one else.' I could not stop the chattering of my teeth, and felt a strange feeling of joy that I could now give loose reins to my hatred. Through the parlour came the sound of voices, and the clatter of knives and plates. They were evidently eating, and had not heard the bell. I rushed into my study, and recalled the scene, a week ago, when I had smashed the things on the table and thrust her out. I now experienced the very same desire to beat, to destroy. My hate metamorphosed me into a malignant, cunning, savage beast; or I was like a human being in times of danger, when a man acts with precision, not hurriedly, yet without losing a moment, and all with a single, definite end in view.

"The first thing I did was to take off my boots; then, in my stockings, I went to the wall and took down a crooked Damascus blade that had never been used and was exceedingly sharp. Then, stepping out softly, I suddenly threw open the door. To my dying day I shall not forget the expression of mingled despair and terror on both their faces; and this was precisely what I desired, and gave me pleasure. He was seated at the table, but started to his feet and leaned his back against the cupboard. For an instant I stood on the threshold, holding the dagger behind my back. . . . 'And we were at our music,' he began. . . . 'Well, this is a surprise,' commenced she. . . . But neither of them finished. I felt again the insane frenzy to destroy, to assure the triumph of madness, and I yielded myself up to it,

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body and soul. I threw myself upon her, to plunge the dagger into her side, under her breast. (I chose this spot from the very first.) He caught me by the arm, and shouted at the top of his voice . . . . 'Think of what you are doing! Help!' I freed my arm and rushed upon him. His eyes encountered mine, his very lips became bloodless and white, his eye glistened with an unwonted lustre, he dived under the piano and fled from the room. I rushed after him, but felt a heavy weight suspended from my left arm. It was she. Her touch inflamed me; I exulted to appal her, and struck backward with all the force of my left arm, hitting her in the face. She screamed and let go my arm. I turned round to her. She had fallen on the couch, holding her hands up to her bruised eyes—eyes full of terror and hatred for me, her enemy. She began to speak and to clutch at my hand—the hand that held the dagger. . . . . 'Think of what you are doing. . . . . Nothing has passed between him and me. . . . . Nothing. . . . . I swear to you!' But the frenzy into which I had lashed myself went on *crescendo*; for fury has its laws as well as other mental states. 'Do not lie, hell-hag!' I screamed. Then, without relinquishing my hold of the dagger, I caught her with my left hand by the throat, threw her over on her back, and began to strangle her. How tough her neck seemed! I struck the dagger with all the strength I could muster into her left side, under the ribs. . . . .

"I knew very well what I was doing; for the more I fanned the flame of my fury, the brighter burned the light of consciousness within me. I felt, and still remember, the momentary resistance of the corset, and of something else, and then the passage of the

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knife cutting its way through the soft parts of the body. She seized the dagger with both her hands, wounding them, but without staying its progress. I drew the dagger out again, stood motionless for an instant, and waited to see what would happen. My wife sprang to her feet and screamed. Suddenly the blood welled forth from under her corset. I lingered on till she fell. The nurse ran in to her assistance, and it was only then that I flung away the dagger and quitted the room. I walked along the corridor, sent the maid to her mistress, and went to my room. I took down a loaded revolver and placed it on the table; then took out my cigarettes and began to smoke. Overcome with drowsiness, I fell asleep. After two hours I was awakened by a knocking at the door. 'This is the police,' I thought, and took up the revolver, though I knew very well I would not kill myself. I went to the door, drew back the bolt, and saw my wife's sister. 'Vasa, she's dying,' said she; 'go to her.' 'Wait a moment,' I exclaimed; 'it's so stupid to go without boots; let me just draw on my slippers.'

"My wife was in bed, and the first thing that struck me was her light grey dress lying on the chair, all black with blood; but I was most impressed by her swollen and bruised face. All beauty was gone; nothing but the repulsive was left. I decided in my own mind that she wanted to repent, and that I must be generous and forgive her, so went close up to her bedside. 'You have your way now,' she said; 'you have killed me. Yes, admire what you have done!' Mingling with physical pain and the nearness of death, I could read the old familiar look of sullen animal hatred. On the threshold stood her sister with the

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children. When I looked at them, then at her poor, bruised face . . . . 'Forgive me!' I exclaimed. . . . But, 'Forgiveness! all that is rubbish,' she ejaculated. . . . 'Oh, if I could only keep from dying!' Then, raising herself a little, she fixed on me her gleaming, feverish eyes and exclaimed . . . . 'You have worked your will . . . . I hate you!' Then as her mind wandered . . . . "Kill me, I'm not afraid. . . . Kill him too . . . . only kill them all. . . . He's gone . . . . he's gone! . . . ." The delirium continued till the end. She recognised no one. The same day at noon she passed away.

"I remained eleven months in prison waiting my trial. They took me to the house . . . . (pardon this weakness!) . . . . and only when I beheld her in her coffin did I see it in its true light, did I realise the vast discrepancy between the mean and frivolous things that had wounded me and the fateful thing I had done. . . . Only then did I realise how, through my instrumentality, it had come to pass that she, once loving, moving, warm, was now still, waxlike, cold; and that this could be righted nowhere, never, by no one. . . . Oh, oh, oh!

"The jury acquitted me, as you know. I have settled all my estates on her children, and am going away. Good-bye. . . . Yes, good-bye. . . .!"

II

THE KREUTZER SONATA

2

THE INTERPRETATION: EUNUCHS  
FOR THE KINGDOM'S SAKE





# THE KREUTZER SONATA

## THE INTERPRETATION: EUNUCHS FOR THE KINGDOM'S SAKE

"But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart."  
—Matthew v. 28.

"His disciples say unto him, If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry. But he said unto them, All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given. For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it."—Matthew xix. 10, 11, 12.

To read text before sermon, always advisable, is here absolutely necessary. The text speaks of abstinence, for various reasons, from the physical pleasures associated with marriage. The sermon enforces the text as never sermon before in this world. The text declares explicitly that it is not for general application, cannot expect to be universally admitted, but is for those select men and women, those elect souls, who are able to receive it. Let it not be forgotten anywhere throughout this unparalleled, this stupefying discourse. The sermon is for him who can receive it.

This frightful parable was first told about a dozen

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years ago, and the teller has informed us he adheres to its teaching still ; that he has no doubt of the truthfulness of his conceptions, or their value for the human family. He sees what no one else seems to see, and gathers all his force to set forth the hard, the unpalatable truth.

It is necessary also to be severely true to the sermonic idea ; to keep ever before us the preacher, not the writer—the moralist, not the artist—the parable, not the story—the judgment of sin, not the tickling of the fancy. Here is something more than a psychological master-piece by the first literary genius of our time. Here is an outline of the principles that must be adopted to produce an ethical form of civilisation and a pure humanity, an impeachment of the artificial culture that manufactures neurotic degenerates, a delineation of morbid immorality for which our religious and social conventions are directly responsible—an expanded and lively version of Jesus' terriblest philippics against the Pharisees. Here is something more than an example of the awful doom of those who, being spiritual, become animal, and degrade the holy discipline of matrimony into a licence for sensual indulgence. Here is an assertion that individual degeneracy is the result of social degeneracy, and that both have their roots in the corrupt soil of a conventional society ; so that when a male sexual degenerate has killed a female as the result of a critical sexual episode, a jury, as society's representatives, cannot do other than acquit, for they instinctively feel that the crime is society's rather than the individual's. / Here is a revelation of that prosaic and uninteresting character which cannot detach itself from the social order, unlit

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save by the gleams from hell which flare up in its sordid chamber — lending an unholy glamour to an existence too wretched to be called a farce, and a death too mean to be considered a tragedy. Here are torn away those rags of romance, poetry, sentiment which society has carefully wrapped around its “lusts which war against the soul,” showing them naked, hideous, repulsive, disgusting, holding them up to contempt in the person of a creature irredeemably selfish, vile, mean, jealous, devoid of principles as of ideas, whose egoistic vanities punish him with the most excruciating mental tortures, finally unhinging his mind and reducing him to the level of a cruel and crafty beast.

As the preacher pursues the horrid discourse, we feel that every conventional prejudice we ever cherished is being shrivelled up; but it is no use complaining, or crying “Halt! mercy!” for the preacher is without pity, and is doing precisely what he set out to do. For no other purpose did he open his mouth. Mrs Grundy, for certain, will not hold pews in the church where this remorseless Daniel comes to the judgment of her shallow conventions; rather will she flee the scene, to implore the editor of her religious weekly to desist from reporting so much as a single word of these hideous discourses! She never heard anything like it in her life! She hopes she never shall again! If the discourses, printed, are despatched through the mails of Western Christianity, she will stir up Mr Grundy to seize them as improper literature. Here is a great reformer on the rostrum—a Puritan of Puritans—a modern Augustine—a preacher who combines the sanctity of a Jerome with the fury of a Savonarola

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—but his discourses are too improper for publication ! Never, since the Jews took up stones to stone the Son in the Name of the Father, did irony further go, or Pharisaism make itself so ridiculous.

The doctrines of this appalling homily may be set forth under the three chief phases of sexual attachment—Love, Courtship, Marriage.

The theory that “romantic” love hallows marriage, and forms a sufficient basis on which to build the family, is one that prevails almost universally in Western Christendom. Motions purely animal are considered admirable, and indeed noble, if they do but present themselves in meretricious colourings borrowed from the regions of sentiment and fancy—body drawing charm and tint from mind. Identity of ideal is supposed to lead, properly and inevitably, to partnership of couch ; with the result that the further question has now to be agitated—whether a subsequent change of ideal ought not to be followed by a corresponding change of partner ? Pressed into definition, the romanticist cannot help exposing this fatal flaw in the foundation of the family ; for it is manifest that “the preference of one person for another to the exclusion of everyone else” puts no time-limit to such companionships—an hour or an existence—and leaves the shorter union as permissible as the longer. The ideal state demanded by the theory—the grand and heavenly sentiment—works out in ways unmentionable, that cannot be recalled without feelings of disgust (Nature’s very object !), and should be branded as revolting, instead of being cried up as splendid and sublime.

The observer of family tragedies may be pardoned

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for his scepticism of results secured through the romantic attachments; and for demanding facts, not fictions; history, not novels. He thinks it as improbable that a man's predilection for a certain woman, or a woman's for the same man, will endure throughout the lifetime of both, as that two peas in a cartload shall lie exactly side by side; as absurd to think of loving one person sensuously through a lifetime as to expect a candle to continue burning as long as one lives. / Romantic love is like taking opium; the sensation is delightful while it lasts, but it passes, and the awaking is dreary. / Experiences drawn from the sense-functions are such that it is impossible not to desire a renewal of them; whence the need of novelty, and the impingement of the home upon the brothel. It is the disillusionment necessarily arising from the romantic attachments with their inevitable satiation, jealousy, hysteria, that leads men to kill their wives, blow out their own brains, fight duels with other men; that begets all those domestic tragedies whose frequency alone prevents society from being horror-stricken. Thus terrible is the Nemesis which dogs the steps of those who persuade themselves that prettily-disguised sensuality is true marriage. And it was to depict the inferno of the married sensualist that the preacher delivered this awe-inspiring discourse.

To assist it to self-condemnation, the preacher rivets upon society a sense of grotesque inconsistency in keeping its women tamed at home, like horses in a field, whilst men are permitted to roam at large. The prenuptial impurity of men is regarded with general approval, commended to youth by older men, provided for by a paternal Government; whilst the

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medical profession warrant it scientific and hygienic, undertake to safeguard it against disease, and take a hundred times more trouble to cure the ills it creates than would suffice to prevent the evil itself. Mere boys are prepared for easy fall when occasion presents itself, and will presently substitute the "cash-nexus" for all moral, simple, and natural relations with the other sex. Nevertheless, they will be permitted to frequent the *salon* and ballroom, spruce, neat, shaven, perfumed, in spotless linen, irreproachable evening-dress or faultless uniform, to approach the sisters and daughters of their friends, dance with them, encircling their waists with their arms, and—instead of being gently instructed to retire—will be welcomed, petted, lionised. It is in this way that fashionable society (in contrast with the labouring man who lives on bread and drives a wheel-barrow sixteen hours a day, being thereby saved from ecstasies, tendernesses, poetries, and all the contrivances of mamma and the dressmaker) breeds young lovers as hothouses force cucumbers, combining idleness and surfeit, physical inactivity with stimulating foods and drinks, until their artificial life passes through the prism of the romantic sentiments, and flushes up in the delightful sensation called "falling in love."

It is through analysis and moral dissection like this the preacher leads his shuddering audience—horrible, but faithful, like Rembrandt's Anatomy Lesson—till he lifts them to the clear heights of virgin purity and Christian unions. It is a shameful thing, he says, for a man to have to do with any save her to whom he is to be dedicated for life; and it is as unjust to insist upon the purity of one sex as

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it is immoral to permit a lower standard to the other. Love is here differentiated from lust in all its gay and sentimental disguises—irradiated with whatever hues from the leaping flames of the pit. The massed shades of the sensualist's hell form a background against which to set his pure conception of Christian love. Love must be a union of souls rather than bodies, and should seek the perfection of character rather than the gratification of appetite. This is the idea that is pressed home upon the mind with tremendous force, and with a severe consistency that will, to many minds, make it seem an unreal and impossible conclusion, the issue of an unreal and impossible conception of life. A law of life which seems to contemplate the gradual cessation of the human race by the slow extinction of the sexual passion is not one that will commend itself to the crowd. But the refined sense, piercing intellect, and rare spirit of the preacher cause him to face even this pitiless logic with serenity. He knows very well he is a Voice crying in the wilderness of modern luxury, convention, materialism. The sermon is for him who can receive it.

The main theme of this unparalleled homily now advances to that phase of sexual relationship covered by the term Courtship.

Courtship may be said to begin when the sinner goes in search of a wife, and carefully looks round for a suitable girl, who must be young, pure, attractive, and so on. The innumerable unions of the candidate are not supposed to disqualify him for the lily hand of a spotless maid. Nay, her very perfection is an additional reason why the spotted leper should wed

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her, for the correction of his own blood and the chances of a future generation. Don Juan and the Virgin Mary—excellent match!—let the banns be published forthwith!

It makes no difference that the female victim of vice and convention should be ignorant of the pre-nuptial infidelity of her suitor, and that when she discovers he is not virgin-pure like herself she should be filled with horror and stupefaction. Her groom, she will find, prides himself on being a man of honour; society also has agreed to accept it as inevitable and right; so she will resign herself to her fate and try to forget. But a blow has been dealt at the security of the domestic structure. Men who have sinned against innocent womanhood before marriage are not entitled to complain if initiated womanhood sins against them after marriage.

Society, as a matter of fact, is arranged in the interests of the sinner, and seems deliberately planned to inflame instead of to restrain the passions. It is a marriage-trap wherein successive generations of initiated mothers place successive generations of deceived daughters. Those initiated mothers know very well that what society calls sublime and romantic love depends less upon moral qualities than on frequent meetings, touching hands, meeting knees, encircling arms, whirling dances, the cut of the dress and curl of the hair. So the girls wait at receptions or dance at ballrooms; and the young men go to look at them, selecting those whose shoulders, busts, curls, or complexions they like best. The young men stroll backwards and forwards, scrutinising, entirely satisfied, not knowing



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that the watchful mother sits by, sure of the capture of one or other. As for the poor girls, they, of course, do not realise the plain truth, nor interpret the buzz of the ball to really mean—"Take my Lily. . . . No, take me. . . . Do take me, dear; see what nice shoulders I have. . . . No please take me; observe how I can waltz. . . . Do but hear how I can discuss the Origin of Species . . . !" The truth is that the fashionable and the unfortunate woman are precisely alike in this—that the supreme object of their lives is to attract and fascinate men; the maiden, in order to have as many lovers as possible to choose from; the matron, in order to command the fidelity of her husband. To this end—the seduction of men—are the same toilets, exposures, projections, glittering toys, intoxicating perfumes, demoralising music.

It is fairly arguable that the old style was better—the style that yet prevails amongst the Chinese, Indians, Russian and other peasantry, forming the great majority of the human family—according to which the parents arranged the match. The devotees of romantic love may compare it to the coupling of animals, with parents in place of owners, but it could at least plead that it was less stimulating and less hypocritical. And, after all the glib talk about the love that hallows marriage, the moralist sees that to risk the stability of marriage upon the vapoury sentiments is to open the way to all manner of infringements and irregularities. Than our system, no worse could possibly be devised.

The system, for another thing, thrusts the degradation of woman upon us, through all our deftest disguises, as a hideous reality. Though we yield

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her first place, pick up her pocket-handkerchief, even permit her some small position in civil government, woman knows very well that her real position is unmodified—she is a slave whose business is to give men pleasure, as black people are slaves to bring them profit. We leave her no option but to secure ascendancy by playing on men's sensuous organisation. Men enslave women to their vices, and women enslave men to their social ambitions. Men enslave her through her helplessness and necessities, and she enslaves men through their senses. Man's humiliation of woman compels her to restore the balance by humbling him to her whims, follies, extravagances. The impressive form her vengeance assumes, and the result of her terrible power over her master and lord, are seen in the way she condemns to the penal servitude of mines and factories millions of people, generations of slaves, nine-tenths of the human race, who, to provide her with the equipages, jewels, toys, ornaments, dresses necessary to maintain her ascendancy over men's senses, must perish in hard labour and imprisonment. Then men wonder why it is that women, so far from being helpers, are hinderers of the world's development. It is because only by these means can women maintain their social dominion.

The immediate and obvious result of this stupid and wicked scheme is to reduce to barrenness what should be the most luxuriant period of human intercourse. Courtship between men and women reared in such an atmosphere is a dry and sterile business, empty of spirituality, even of intelligence; conversation being hardly possible, communion quite impossible. After the topics and plans relating to

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the new life have been discussed, there remains no more to say, and the period of *ennui* and weariness is curtailed only by the excitements and festivities of the wedding.

The honeymoon hardly saves the situation, for, in the absence of spiritual communion, it is found inconceivably wearisome and disgusting—like learning to smoke. The wedding-tour, with its isolation of the young couple, is nothing but a licence to unlimited pleasure, an endorsement of the whole sensuous theory, the commencement of sure satiation, dislike, misery, disgust.

Christian love is rational and natural; so the courtship that attends it is that of beings endowed with a rational and spiritual nature; beings who are guided by principle, dominated by reason, and directed towards the improvement of the soul.

Who is he that speaks this? He knows that he is a Voice and nothing more—a Voice crying in the wilderness of modern sense and vanity. The preaching is for the man who is able to receive it.

Marriage that follows on such Love and such Courtship must be of the same kind, for men do not gather grapes of thorn, nor figs of thistle. Base views of love and courtship are the fount and origin of after-suffering and crime, the explanation and cause of subsequent misery and violence. It is not in the nature of romantic love to endure, to result in lifelong happiness. For a month the couple are happy, a year, two years; then they hate each other for the rest of their lives; spending their time paying homage to the respectabilities, trying to hide the truth from the world and even from themselves, believing their case

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to be exceptional, not knowing that ninety-nine per cent. of married people are plunged into just such a hell, where they are like prisoners chained together, and hating each other. The human nature in the married pair rises up to protest against the animal nature which is crushing it in both of them ; and it reveals its presence in fierce and passionate hatred of the physical tyranny which is destroying spiritual freedom. Intercourse of a larger and more spiritual nature is gradually restricted ; partly because their mutual interest ceases to extend beyond the physical, partly because the slightest excursion beyond the boundaries of domestic affairs is enough to provoke discord ; till conversation is reduced to such dimensions as the very brutes have means of carrying on. They come to hate each other's simplest gestures, as if they were in themselves bad actions. Quarrels become more frequent and savage—one a month, a week, a day—always the same story, without modification, without variation ; until it becomes evident that conflict is not the result of accident, but necessity, and must constitute the normal relation of the pair. The sentiment called "love" being exhausted, its place is taken by a cold, venomous hostility, until two egoists stand face to face, perfect strangers to each other, or look at each other across gulfs of bridgeless isolation. It is true that the animal nature does its best to compensate for the absence of the spiritual, and so orders it that periods of "reconciliation," under the influence of the feeling called "love," regularly follow periods of strife. Outbreaks of anger are followed by bursts of headlong appetite ; the separating gulfs are filled up with the vapours of "love" (mere exhalations of putrescence), with smiles,

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kisses, embraces; and the reconciliations are even more disgusting than the differences; the physical passion that reunites more repulsive than the mental passion that divided. The two passions are really opposite poles of the same feeling—the animal appetite and the human protest—the misused body provoking the angry spirit—till hysterical excitement becomes the normal condition of the woman, morose savagery that of the man. When a husband kills his wife with a knife, the witnesses will try to prove that the cause was jealousy, and that it was justified; but the true cause is the yawning gulf between, the absence of all contact between spirit and spirit, the straining away from each other under the repulsive power of animalism.

Jealousy of the most excruciating nature is the common and inevitable lot of all husbands who live with their wives after the fashion of "romantic" unions; and this never gives them a moment's respite, though after certain domestic events it is aggravated till it becomes unbearable, maddening, cruel as the grave. Othello hates to lose the monopoly of Desdemona's person, and will rather kill her.

It might be expected that motherhood, with all its sacred obligations, would be sufficient to allay the animal pangs of jealousy, or unite in human bonds those who persistently cultivated the animal. But even motherhood does not ensure the recognition of the ideal; nor eradicate the false root of egoism; nor plant the flower of altruistic sympathy and care. Assisted by the doctors—who foster false notions of romantic and sensual love, by discouraging now the bearing, again the suckling of offspring—the mother may prove a mere monster, declining the first

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responsibilities of marriage and parenthood. The disordered husband will immediately conclude that she who can deliberately trample upon the duties of a mother may, with equal facility, despise those of a wife; and when her appearance improves, and her natural coquettishness increases, his unstrung nerves will behold only tokens of wantonness, magnets for men, a beautiful female without a curb!

Concomitantly with those convulsing jealousies in the male bosom, the female mind will begin to really entertain wandering thoughts. A husband's "love," having through passion, hate, and jealousy become impossible, she will begin to dream of another "love," to perceive another world of joy she must not let slip, to take measures to increase the attractiveness of her appearance and the number of her accomplishments. A catastrophe is inevitable.

The only question that remains is how to terminate this state of affairs; whether by emigration, suicide, or murder—and if by pistol, cord, knife, or poison. The killing may not necessarily be with a knife, on a certain day of a year, followed by a jury-trial; but such killing of a very sure sort as is being perpetrated in all such establishments at this moment.

The remedy? Our preacher is ready to declare it; but so are not his hearers to receive it. Divorce is a remedy as futile as it is unvirtuous; for it would only encourage the idea that "romantic" unions may be successively contracted wherever, and whenever, the romantic fancy required; whereas our preacher holds such sentiments must be altogether extinguished. Two persons must be willing to live together without reference to the physical attractiveness of either, simply to improve character; the

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moral and spiritual must supplant the physical and passional as a basis for marriage. To this end divorce must be impossible.

Neither will the higher education of women effect any material improvement; but a radical change in man's conception of her, according to which he would cease to regard her as an instrument of pleasure—emancipating himself from that conception embodied in the entire painting, sculpture, poetry of the Western world.

Continence in the married state must be carried to far greater heights of honour. The road forward is the road back to Nature, as exemplified in the sane and wholesome brutes, which do not compel the female to be the mother and nurse of her young and at the same time the mistress of her mate, but keep the bearing and nursing functions entirely separate from the procreative. The observance of this simple natural law would fundamentally reform the wedded relation. The ideal must more and more supplant the passional. The awful text, "whosoever looketh," must be applied to one's own wife, and not alone to other women. Until this change in man's view of woman, and woman's view of herself, is effected, she must always remain a creature of a lower order, and marriage will spell demoralisation.

The Church must more carefully and assiduously teach that her ceremonies are something more than a warrant for taking possession of a certain woman to the exclusion of other men; though it cannot do even this till it has learned to make Christianity a reality, not a mere collection of words. Not till then will the sacramental view of marriage become a reality. A step upwards will have been taken

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when the Church persuades women that maidenhood—now their fear and shame—is truly their highest state.

If the fear be interjected that this would mean the extirpation of the human race, the preacher is ready: Would that be such a calamity? When humanity has reached the summit of moral perfection for which it was created, why should it mind ceasing to exist? There is no further reason for its existence! Do not religion and science agree in teaching that it shall, one day, cease to exist at anyrate?

It is only by these higher views of marriage that the lower can be fought and overcome. Only by the conception of Christian Love, Courtship, Marriage can the romantic fallacies of society, with their consequent miseries, vices, crimes, be displaced. Then will come what our Tennyson has beautifully called "the world's great bridals, chaste and calm."

But the Voice still cries in the wilderness of vice and vanity. The message is for him who can receive it.



III

RESURRECTION

I

A PARABLE OF DEATH IN LUST  
AND LIFE IN LOVE



# RESURRECTION

## A PARABLE OF DEATH IN LUST AND LIFE IN LOVE

THIS tells the very common story of the ruin of a young girl, Katúsha Máslova by name; but leads on to very uncommon developments, showing how her destroyer, Dmítri Ivánovitch NekhlúdoFF by name, was roused by the sight of her destruction to become her saviour and deliverer, and succeeded in raising both himself and her to a new and risen life. That is why the tale is called *Resurrection*.

Katúsha Máslova was born out of wedlock, her father being a gipsy tramp, and her mother a farm-worker who had already borne five undesired babies, all of whom she had carefully baptised and then carelessly neglected till they died. The sixth baby would have shared the fate of its predecessors had it not chanced to be brought forth in a cowshed of a dairy-farm belonging to two maiden ladies, landowners, one of whom, going out in the morning to scold a milkmaid, saw the helpless little baby, pitied, and offered to stand God-mother to it. Sometime afterwards the mother fell ill and died; the maiden ladies took the girl waif into their home, where her pretty face, black eyes, and lively spirits

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greatly entertained them; and she grew up with them, well-trained and educated, holding the position and performing the duties of half ward and half servant.

She lived in this manner till she was sixteen, when Nekhlúdoﬀ, the old ladies' nephew, a rich young prince, just nineteen years of age, came to spend a summer's vacation at his aunts' farm; and Katúsha, not daring to acknowledge it to herself, fell in love with him.

Nekhlúdoﬀ, who was still attending the University, was preparing a vacation essay on land tenure, for he had already read the writings of Herbert Spencer and Henry George, and, being convinced that private ownership in land was wrong, had decided to give up to the peasant labourers the land he had inherited from his father.

Happy in the fields and woods, his horse, his boat, his books, Nekhlúdoﬀ took little notice of the black-eyed, quick-footed Katúsha; for he was yet pure as mother-heart could wish. But on Ascension Day a few young friends came to the farm, and there were games in the meadow, joined in by Katúsha, whose abounding vitality and innocent joy shone in her radiant face and eyes black as sloes, and expressed themselves in the rapid movements of her firm young limbs and well-knit body. Joining hands, as the rules of the game required, and running behind a lilac-bush, Nekhlúdoﬀ, not knowing how it happened, stooped smiling towards the shining face looking up with the glad, innocent smile, and kissed Katúsha on the lips. "There, you've done it," she said, and, with a swift movement freeing her hand, ran to join the other players.

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After this the attraction between Nekhlúdoﬀ and Katúsha was something they could no longer hide from themselves, for it filled their lives with gladness. She read his books, and they had short talks when meeting on the verandah or in the yard, and sometimes in the old servant's room when he went to drink tea. It was the love of a true-hearted lad for a pure-hearted girl, fraught with no danger, almost unconscious; and if the maiden aunts (who had eyes) had told Nekhlúdoﬀ their real fear—which was that he might marry Katúsha—it is very likely that, with his usual straightforwardness, he would have declared his resolve to marry the sweet, merry little girl with the slightly-squinting eyes that always affected him so strangely, who filled his whole being with gladness. When the time came to go away, he felt he was leaving something beautiful, precious, something which would never come again, and grew very sad. "Good-bye, Katúsha," he said, as he was getting into the trap; "thank you for everything." "Good-bye, Dmítri Ivánovitch," she returned, with her pleasant, tender voice, keeping back the tears that filled her eyes; then ran away into the hall, where she could cry in peace.

When, after three years, Nekhlúdoﬀ returned to visit his aunts, he was completely changed. He had just been promoted to the rank of officer, and was going to join his regiment. His life in the army had demoralised him, so that he had become fast, luxurious, extravagant, filled with animal selfishness. He no longer felt the same neighbourly interest in the land question. He did not cherish the same honourable respect for all women.

Whether or not he was already cherishing in his

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heart those evil designs against Katúsha suggested by his uncontrolled animal self, it is certain that he was soon compelled to acknowledge to himself that he ought to go away again, that no good could come of his staying; yet the attraction of this laughing, open-hearted girl was so delightful to him that he stayed on.

It was Easter morning at the village church, and Katúsha was there with her well-shaped figure, white dress, and a rapt, joyous expression on her face, by which Nekhlúdoﬀ knew that exactly the same that was singing in his soul was also singing in hers. Her eyes shining with joy, he saw her give—as was the custom—the threefold Easter kiss to a disgusting beggar with a red scab on his face in place of a nose; and he saw that to her everything was right, everything was beautiful, for she loved.

“Christ is risen,” she said, blushing and drawing near to Nekhlúdoﬀ. “Christ is risen,” he replied; and they exchanged the threefold kiss. Katúsha looked as if she had accomplished some joyous task. Her whole chest heaved with a deep sigh; she looked straight into his face with a look of devotion, virgin purity, and love in her black, very slightly-squinting eyes.

When they reached the farm for breakfast, Nekhlúdoﬀ, seizing a private opportunity, caught Katúsha up and kissed her rudely. It was a dreadful kiss—very different from that first thoughtless kiss behind the lilac-bush, or the Easter kiss that morning in the churchyard, and she felt it so. “Oh, what are you doing?” she cried, in a tone as if he had irreparably broken something of priceless value, and ran quickly away.

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All that day he watched for her, demented, and all evening—the ungovernable animal man now alone ruling him ; but Katúsha avoided him—the happy, joyous smile on her face had given way to a frightened, piteous look. But night came, and, with night, opportunity.

When next he stood in the porch, day was breaking, the mist hung thick below, lit by a horned moon with horns turned upwards, from the river came up the sound of breaking ice and sobbing water, and Nekhlúdoﬀ was asking himself what was the meaning of it all, and whether that which had befallen him was a great joy or a great misfortune.

Beyond question, it was a terrible misfortune for Katúsha—a misfortune for which the hundred-rouble note he thrust upon her was poor compensation.

Some months after this, hearing that Nekhlúdoﬀ was to pass that way by the railway, at night, without calling at the farm, Katúsha, who was often surprised and touched by the soft movements of that which now lay beneath her heart, went to the station to see him and let him know. It was a wild night of wind and rain when Katúsha ran across the fields and reached the station only in time to see Nekhlúdoﬀ sitting with some other officers in a brightly lit carriage, playing cards and laughing as the train moved off ; and though she followed, clinging on, stumbling, falling, the train vanished into darkness, leaving her crouching in the mud and the rain, forsaken, and blown about by the wind. From that dreadful night Katúsha ceased to believe in God or goodness.

All that afterwards happened strengthened her in

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this disbelief. Noticing her state, the maiden ladies turned her away. The police-officer, the forester, and the students at whose homes she successively took service all appeared to consider her a creature fit only for their lowest uses. Her baby died of ill-treatment at the hands of ignorant and callous nurses. Finally, having gone to a registry office, and there met a woman with bracelets on her bare, plump arms, and rings on most of her fingers, Katúsha was induced to go to her home, partook of the cake and sweet wine set before her, was introduced to a man with a white beard who looked at her with glistening eyes, and became an inmate of the house. For seven years Katúsha lived the terrible life, learning to smoke and drink, and even to submit to the weekly medical examinations, trying to find a certain pleasure in ease and vanity, harbouring also a dim idea that thus she was avenging herself for her wrong ; seven years of horror during which she changed houses several times, was once in hospital, and finally landed in prison as a criminal ; seven awful years which she afterwards summed up in the words, " It is hell—from eight till four in the morning, and every night the same."

At the age of twenty-six Katúsha Máslova found herself in prison as a thief and a murderer ; and this is how it happened. Smelkóff, a Siberian merchant of vast proportions, had visited Máslova at the house where she lived, and, running short of money and being very drunk, sent Máslova to his lodgings to fetch him forty roubles, giving her the key of his portmanteau, which she opened in the presence of a man and a woman, servants at the lodging-house.



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They saw that the bag contained a great deal of money—whole packets of hundred-rouble notes; but Máslova, taking only the forty roubles, locked the portmanteau, returning with the key and the money to Smelkóff. The two servants, after she had returned to the merchant, opened the bag with a false key and stole the money—amounting to more than three thousand roubles. Later in the day, when Máslova returned to his lodging-house with Smelkóff, who was still very drunk and struck her, giving her his enormous diamond ring as a make-peace, she became terribly wearied out with the importunities of the dreadful man, and, going out into the passage and complaining to the man-servant who had stolen the money that the merchant would not let her go, was advised to give him some white powder in his brandy, to make him sleep, which she, in all innocence, did. The powder, however, instead of being an opiate as she thought, was really poison, which the man-servant thought was the surest means of preventing the discovery of the theft and of throwing all the blame on Máslova. And that is how it happened that, on a certain spring morning, Katúsha Máslova, with white face, brilliant black eyes, and bosom swelling under the prison cloak, found herself standing behind the grating in the criminal court, between two gendarmes holding naked swords, to be tried for robbery and murder.

Now it came to pass, on that same spring morning, that Nekhlúdoﬀ had been summoned to attend the court as a juryman; and as he sat in his chair opposite the prisoners' grating, adjusted his *pince-nez*, and looked at the female before him, he slowly awoke to the truth that, in spite of the unhealthy pallor and fulness of face, that sweet, peculiar

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individuality, slight squint of the eyes, naïve smile, and expression of readiness on the face and figure, could belong to no other than that Katúsha whom he had once really loved, but whom he had destroyed in a fit of delirious passion, then abandoned, and never again brought to mind.

After the first attack of memory and conscience, Nekhlúdoﬀ was filled with fear lest Máslova should recognise him, accuse him of being the author of her ruin, and disgrace him before the open court. He felt as one going to be judged rather than to judge. But he soon saw that he was not recognised, and now he began to be filled with better feelings, and a fierce and complicated struggle went on in his soul. In this one case he saw the cruelty, cowardice, and baseness of his whole life. "What's the matter?" said one of the jurymen, hearing Nekhlúdoﬀ utter a strange noise. It was the sound of weeping fiercely kept back.

By a curious blunder, caused chiefly through the impatience of the President to get away to the company of his Swiss girl, Máslova was pronounced guilty, though nearly everyone was convinced of her innocence, and sentenced to four years' hard labour in Siberia. Many people were sorry, feeling that they had made a shameful hash of the case, but Nekhlúdoﬀ was determined to do all he could to get the sentence reversed, no matter at what cost to himself. He spoke to the President, engaged a leading advocate to get up a petition to the Appeal Court in St Petersburg, called upon governors, lawyers, police officials, visited the prisons again and again; but all in vain. His petition to the Tsar was more fortunate, resulting in the commutation

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of the four years' hard labour to four years' exile to one of the nearer districts of Siberia.

The chief interest of this period, however, centres in the movements of Nekhlúdoſſ's mind and his relations with Katúsha Máslova. He now saw everything with different eyes—the social flattery and lies beneath the grandeur of the fashionable people he moved amongst, the frightful injustice and cruelty connected with the entire organisation of law-courts and prisons—and it all became to him shameful and horrid. He saw that he must stop lying and tell the whole truth. He realised that he could not atone for his sin by merely paying an advocate to take up Máslova's case; and he resolved to confess his shame openly, to marry Máslova if she would let him, and share her exile in Siberia. After a night of wrestling, walking his room, he stopped, folded his hands in front of his breast as he used to do when a little child, lifted his eyes, and prayed the Lord to help him, to teach him, to enter within him and purify him from all these abominations. Then he went to the window, opened it, and looked into the garden, murmuring, "How delightful! how delightful! Oh, God, how delightful!" meaning, not the moonlit night, but that which was going on in his soul, the resurrection life beginning to stir within him.

In the morning Nekhlúdoſſ visited the prison, resolved to tell Máslova everything, to beg her forgiveness, and to ask her to marry him, on the way confessing his sin to various people—his old housekeeper, the lawyer, the governor. When, from behind the wire-netting where prisoners were permitted to converse with visitors, Máslova first saw

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him, she could not hear his broken and stammering words, but his appearance reminded her of her former lover, and a deep line of suffering appeared on her brow. "You're like . . . but no, I don't know you." "I have come to ask you to forgive me," he said; "I wish to redeem my sin." Though he distinctly saw the crow's-feet round her eyes, the wrinkles round her mouth, and the swollen eyelids, he told her he would marry her. Máslova, however, refused, with dignified but also with violent words, telling him that she was a convict and he a prince, that having got pleasure out of her in this life he only wanted to save himself through her in the life to come, that he was disgusting to her and she would rather hang herself. Nekhlúdoff replied mildly that in any case he would go on serving her; which he did. Henceforth he had only three objects in life—the first, to redeem Máslova; the second, to settle all his lands on the peasant labourers, for which purpose he made final visits to his ancestral estates; the third, to oppose the horrible injustices and cruelties his experiences in prison and in Siberia showed him to be connected with the whole judicial system.

It is not to be supposed that Nekhlúdoff succeeded in his great aim of redeeming Máslova without many hindrances. The first hindrance was connected with society, which laughed at him, and thought it all queer and unnecessary; but this he soon overcame. The second was connected with himself, and was more difficult. The tempter frequently urged him to renounce and abandon Máslova again, to permit her to be buried in Siberia, whence she would never emerge to remind him of her existence. Evil women

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rich and fashionable, also tried to draw him aside. He could do nothing with this woman, he sometimes thought; he was only tying a stone round his neck; he was trying to be impossibly good, and it was no use; the sacrifice was too great. In such moods he was able to restore the wavering balance of his inner life only by calling on the God in his soul. And he finally triumphed over his own weakness. But the greatest hindrance arose from Máslova herself. Though actual sin was, after her terrible experience of it, utterly repulsive and disgusting to her mind, yet her whole nature was unhinged and distorted, so that she frequently repelled him by violent manners and vulgar language, as well as by much drinking of vodka. The coarse, luring habit of her former life clung to her still. So far from being ashamed of her former life, he saw that she was, at first, rather proud of it, and even had a philosophy of her own to justify it. But Nekhlúdoff still adhered to his resolution. Indeed, it was only then he began to fully understand his crime. He saw that he had to awaken Máslova's soul. Pity triumphed over disgust. He felt the certainty that love was invincible; and the feeling that no action of Máslova's could change his love for her filled him with joy, and raised his resurrection life to a level never before attained. The night before they left for Siberia he wrote in his diary these words, "To-morrow, a new life will begin."

And the unfortunate Máslova—it must not be supposed she was without her peculiar sorrows and temptations. It was bad enough to be shut up in a horrible prison with many vile (though a few noble) people, to be subject to the hardened officials, with

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the weight of an unjust sentence lying on her mind ; but even worse feelings of resentment and anger were awakened in her by the presence of the original author of her misery, though he was animated by none but the highest motives. Nekhlúdoff, however, felt that this resentment was due to something good in her, and it gave him hope. But Máslova had other temptations. Wherever she went it was her misfortune to attract the notice of the men, who looked on her only as a creature to be made use of, and many of whom inflicted upon her attentions she hated. When she was on her trial, the judges and jurymen all stared and hankered after her, "like flies after sugar" as a prisoner put it, more interested in her physical attractions than the question of her guilt or innocence. When sent back to gaol, the very convicts tormented her by making love to her. Promoted to be a nurse in the prison hospital, the medical assistant annoyed her with his solicitations till she was glad to be sent back to her cell again. On the march to Siberia, the disgusting men tried her quite as severely as the disgusting vermin. For her, sin had lost all its charm. She also had entered upon the resurrection life.

Resentment and tears for her wrecked youth began to be followed by displays of positive moral energy on Máslova's part. She determinedly broke off from cigarettes and vodka, abolished her ringlets and tied her hair in a 'kerchief, suppressed that tendency to even innocent coquetting with men which was natural to her, for she saw with grief and shame that men considered themselves entitled by her past to pester her with those importunities which became increasingly offensive to her. This difficulty of reinstating

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herself in the respect of the world troubled her more than her unjust sentence. She bestirred herself to eager service on behalf of her fellow-prisoners who, like herself, had been unjustly condemned. Resentment against Nekhlúdoﬀ yielded to the higher feeling of regard for his well-being ; for that "he must live too"—live his life out under better auspices than as her husband. It was on the road to Siberia that the inner life of Máslova rose to its full height.

The start to Siberia was made on a blazing day in July, when a gang of convicts—four hundred men and fifty women, mostly criminals, but with a few political prisoners—began their long, weary, deadly march into exile and penal slavery, Nekhlúdoﬀ accompanying them as a voluntary exile. Already—at the very start, amid the crowds, the shouting, the swearing, the clanking of chains and sobbing of women, the flying dust and the consuming heat—five convicts fall and die, smitten with sunstroke. Arrived at the railway station, they are crowded into carriages with grated windows—crushed, suffocated, parched with drought—and a baby is born to a convict mother ; but all must be driven on.

Two thousand five hundred miles they marched into the steppes, Máslova being permitted to travel with the political prisoners, by which she was saved the worst horrors of the journey—its unspeakable filth, disease, vice, and the molestations of the men. She could now live without being reminded of the past she was so anxious to forget. Already she was thankful for her new life ; the open-air walking strengthened her naturally vigorous frame, and fellowship with her new companions—all cultivated

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and interesting men and women—opened out a life of new thoughts and ideas which filled her with joy. She came even to thank God for the unjust sentence which had snatched her from her former self, and given her these new interests in life and these nobler friendships. It was in this Siberian exile, and amid these Siberian prisoners, that Katúsha Máslova found that high place amongst her kind she was by nature fitted to fill. She fully shared with Nekhlúdoﬀ the joy of a traveller on discovering a new, unknown, and beautiful world. As she looked at him with those unfathomable, slightly-squinting eyes, telling him that he had already suffered enough on her account, he felt not only ashamed, but sorry to think of all he was losing with her, and he exclaimed, "What a good woman you are!"

Now whether Máslova's real reason for refusing to entertain Nekhlúdoﬀ's proposal to marry her—a proposal he never ceased to make all through the Siberian journey—was regard for his welfare, or another reason, is perhaps not quite clear; but probably it was the first. The strange look out of the slightly-squinting eyes, and the pathetic smile with which she said, not "good-bye," but "forgive me," revealed her love, and betrayed her feeling that by accepting his offer she would spoil his life. She was glad she had strength to set him free; yet she suffered at parting. She knew a way of burning her boats behind her, and thus preventing that which she regarded as his sacrifice, though he looked upon it as a good.

Amongst the political prisoners was one Vóldemar Símonson, a dishevelled, dark young fellow, with a frowning forehead, deep-set eyes, and a look of child-



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like kindness and innocence, who wore rubber shoes and a rubber jacket because he was a vegetarian and would not wear the skins of slaughtered animals, being also, for similar reasons, against all war and capital punishment. Símónson was the son of a Russian civil servant; had left the university to become a village schoolmaster; was arrested for revolutionary teaching, and exiled. A shy man, though with a will like iron, he silently loved Máslova; but she, being a woman, instinctively discerned his secret, and the discovery that she could awaken love in a man of that kind increased her confidence and self-respect; for she was certain that Símónson was not the man to place his affections unless where there existed peculiar moral qualities; and she set herself to awaken in her nature all the highest qualities she could possibly conceive. They did not utter a word; but their looks plainly told that they understood.

At last Símónson called Nekhlúdoff—for, of course, the whole company knew their strange history—and told him that he loved Katúsha Máslova, and had at last said so to her, but she would settle nothing without his approval. He regarded her, he said, as a splendid, unique human being, who had suffered much, and whose fate he had an awful longing to lighten. Nekhlúdoff replied that, for his part, he too longed to lighten her fate, but would put no restraint upon her; he did not consider himself free, but she was free to accept Símónson's offer. Máslova, on her part, made the simple declaration, "Where Vóldemar Símónson goes, there I will follow." What did it matter? With Símónson the child-hearted revolutionist, or Nekhlúdoff the single-

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hearted prince, it was the same—Katúsha Máslova had risen from the dead.

Dmítri Ivánovitch Nekhlúdoﬀ continued to live the resurrection life. All the horrible evils connected with the machinery of law and government—how to conquer these became the problem of his life. He went to the Sermon on the Mount, and, asking himself, "Is this all?" received the answer, "Yes, it is all!" The strange, paradoxical truth became to him the simplest, truest certainty. He saw that the solution of the world's evil was not theoretical, but practical. Not to kill or even be angry; not to lust or even look; not to swear, whether falsely or truly; not to return evil or even resist it; to love one's friends and also one's enemies—in these laws he now found the meaning of his existence. And a perfectly new life dawned for Nekhlúdoﬀ.

### **III**

## **RESURRECTION**

**2**

**THE INTERPRETATION: UNTIL  
SEVENTY TIMES SEVEN**



# RESURRECTION

## THE INTERPRETATION: UNTIL SEVENTY TIMES SEVEN

THE preacher is a giant, and the sermon gigantic; less than four texts will not serve.

"Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? until seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven."—Matt. xviii. 21-22.

"And why beholdest thou the mote in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?"—Matt. vii. 3.

"He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her."—John viii. 7.

"The disciple is not above his master: but everyone when he is perfected shall be as his master."—Luke vi. 40.

Lest the title and the texts of this great puritan discourse should insufficiently prepare our minds for its delivery, the preacher has furnished us with a clue which will lead us through its vast divisions and subdivisions to the lofty truth in which it culminates. Writing to a correspondent, he says:—"In sublime love, in love from an intellectual aspect, and in the love of a yet higher form, which ennobles man, and which has its highest expression in the 'Resurrection,' my new novel will represent the various aspects of love."

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Like the apostolic writers of the New Testament, this modern apostle starts out from the awful fact of sin; is penetrated through and through with the sense of sin—sin in the individual, in society, in the cosmos. Emphatic as Paul of Tarsus when he declared men to be “dead in trespasses and sins,” and ruthless as when he dissected the diseased body of Greek and Roman vice, this Tolstoy of Russia proclaims the deathly state of modern society, and exposes the universal corruption. Mournful as John the Evangelist when he asserted that the whole world lieth in wickedness; austere as when he warned his disciples against the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life; confident as when he declared that the world passeth away and the lust thereof;—so does this modern gospeller depict a world dead as a burnt-out moon, ghastly as the hollow eye-socket of Richter’s dream; or exhibits men bound in their fleshly lusts of sensuality, drunkenness, gluttony; paralysed by their eye-lusts of covetousness, envy, gold-gloating, sensuous beauty, mocking drapery and embellished limb, the leer on the lovely face of vanity; or buried beneath their cosmic prides of usurped authority and tyrannical government, haughty contempt of the poor, scorn of human rights and liberties, defiance of moral restraints, lawlessness clothed as law. With a strength and genius not granted to Franciscan or Dominican at their best, this latter-day moralist, in opposition to the three worldly lusts, preaches the three religious duties of poverty, chastity, and *disobedience*;—or if that be too strong a word to use in connection with the apostle of non-resistance, say non-recognition, non-acknowledgment. These three great vows of puritan Christianity

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—poverty, chastity, disobedience—he enforces, not only with the conviction of the faithful anchorite, but with the classic genius of an Erasmus, the political passion of a Savonarola, and the popular directness of a Luther whose words were half battles.

If this titanic discourse is apostolic in its solemn doctrine of sin, and puritanic in its stern demand for virtue, it is also evangelical in its announcement of the reality of the re-birth. “Marvel not,” it exclaims with Jesus, “that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again!” The artist-preacher significantly places the chief act of sin in one spring season, and the chief act of condemnation in another. Life is stirring all around and within. In the soul as well as in the cosmos are stirring the forces of the eternal Spring. The heavenly man is coming to birth, asserting himself against the habits of a lifetime and the conventions of society. It needs only that men shall trust the higher nature within as it strives against the lower; shall resist alike the promptings of the animal and the dictates of the world; and shall listen to the inward voice of the spirit speaking in them as in all; bringing each into personal life and joy, and all to universal peace, holiness, unity, love. The story of the awakening of two human souls; of how, after losing their brief and early Eden—an Eden centering in self, and sense, and gratification, and indulgence—they gain a later, soberer, but abiding and blessed Paradise—a Paradise of spirit, and sacrifice, and renunciation, and God;—this story is but a parable setting forth the death in sin, the birth into holiness, the rising into newness of life. Behold the new creature, it proclaims with solemn joy, redeemed from

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vain conversation, alive from the dead! Old things are passed away. Behold, all things are become new!

The steps of the dead man from his grave of sin to the glory of the resurrection life may be traced in the developments of this prodigious parable.

He takes the first step when he comes to a knowledge of his sin. Never did a Paul, an Augustine, or a Bunyan experience more awful convulsions of soul; never from John to General Booth was conviction of sin more poignantly depicted than here. Face to face with his sin, a man can be compared to nothing more fitly than to an unclean puppy, which, whining, drawing back, is yet taken by the pitiless master and smeared in its own nastiness. The Master of men holds them to their sin without pity, that they may learn to loathe it and leave it. In the condemnation of those they have injured they read their own; and even, seated like Felix upon the judgment-seat, tremble, as the convicted prisoner dumbly and unconsciously reasons of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come.

The second step from death to life is confession of sin. "Confess your faults one to another" is here preached with a relentlessness the Apostle James himself, austere and hair-girt, could not surpass. Conviction of sin must culminate in confession of sin; for by the outpouring of guilt comes cleansing of the choked-up channels of the soul. Wakened, the penitent declares that he will stop lying and tell everybody the whole truth—the persons actually wronged, and all others who may be concerned to hear; and only when he has come to this



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resolution is he able to assume the attitude of his pure childhood, and, hands folded in front of the breast, pray, "Lord, help me, teach me, come, enter within me, and purify me of all this abomination!" Purified in the bath of prayer, the resolute soul goes straight to prison and to judgment, on the way confessing guilt alike to wondering friends, hardened gaolers, sneering lawyers, deriding pharisees, until—in the very precincts of crime and habitations of horrid cruelty, amid bolts, bars, dungeons—symbols more terrifying than the overhanging mountains to Bunyan's pilgrim—these soul-cleansing words are heard, "I have come to ask you to forgive me. . . . I wish to redeem my sin."

The third step on the resurrection path—reparation of wrong—follows confession as naturally as gifts follow love. Disposal of goods is a slight affair after cleansing of spirit. Restitution of property is a mere inference from renovation of character. After conviction and confession, the wrong-doer finds it easy to "atone for his sin, not by mere words, but in deed." He will renounce all he has caused others to lose. He will share the fate, however awful, into which his sin has plunged a victim. He will voluntarily accept whatever he has caused others to endure; he will bear their griefs and carry their sorrows; in all their affliction he will be afflicted, and the angel of his presence shall save them. Even though he be a prince and his victim a convict who despises and derides him, he insists that he will still go on serving her. Since his deathly state was compounded of three elements—the lust of the flesh (gratification of appetite at the expense of the innocent), the lust of the eyes (enjoyment of estates, properties, luxuries at the expense

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of the poor), and the pride of life (assumption of authority even to life or death over the abandoned and outraged victims of public injustice)—his risen life must, he determines, follow a three-fold path Godward;—not merely chastity in its negative sense, but positive efforts to redeem the sufferers from concupiscence; not only a negative poverty, but active bestowal of goods upon those despoiled by legalised theft; not only disobedience to, or disregard of, self-appointed tribunals and man-made penalties, but positive obedience to the higher will of God, involving lifelong efforts to deliver the subjects of legal violence and social vengeance. Improving upon the example of the rich young nobleman in the Gospel story, he not only asks the Lord what he may do to inherit eternal life, but, upon the answer, "Sell all that thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven, and come, follow me," he actually gives his ancestral possessions to the peasants who have earned them by their tillage, and follows Jesus in the persons of wronged harlots and outraged convicts.

The immeasurable spheres of death in opposition to which the risen soul now stands are here set forth with amazing distinctness and in all their staggering dimensions.

Here is a dead society—a society based upon brute force, compacted of shams and cruelties, balanced between absurdities and atrocities, constituted, as it would seem, with the very object of destroying social happiness. Its uncircumcised morality is the surest evidence that it, like the individuals who compose it, is dead in trespasses and sins. It hangs a

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man as a murderer if, in civilian clothes, and without fee, he kills his neighbour; but if, in uniform and for a shilling a day, he kills the other, it decorates him with medals. If a rich prince betrays a girl in humble life, he becomes only a more interesting visitor to courts and drawing-rooms; but if he marries her, he is ostracised and laughed at. If a wealthy youth squanders his property in sowing wild oats, he is considered a perfectly normal and proper-spirited young gentleman; but if he gives it to the poor, he is counted eccentric, and his relatives talk seriously about his mental condition. The frivolous, extravagant life is praised; the simple, serious life derided. No wonder that the bewildered spirit just emerging from the darkness of its grave asks itself, "Am I mad because I see what others do not, or are they mad who do these things that I see?" And then society turns upon those who seek to reverse its downside-up morality, exclaiming with the indignant Thessalonians, "These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also!"

This dead society is entombed beneath a deathly system of law and government which, like a glittering cenotaph of ice, it has erected over itself; cunningly devised to destroy personal relations and the sense of responsibility. People who in their ordinary circumstances would be simple and humane, have only to be made government functionaries in order to substitute printed regulations for brotherly feeling and official correctness for humane sense; so that the maltreatment and death of criminals passed through the various shoals of impersonal officials is never suspected to be official murder, cannot be laid to the charge of any one person or group of persons,

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but is due merely to the system. By this insensate and conscienceless machinery, society lays hold of men, women, even children, some of them entirely innocent, others charged with acts which those who condemn would commit in the same circumstances, others with deeds which seemed to them entirely natural and good, others condemned only because they stood morally higher than the rest of the community, and others because they were the victims of social neglect and outrage—these people society flings into gaols, labels them criminals and convicts, takes infinitely more trouble to destroy them than to remove the conditions which produce them, and even fosters the establishments which keep turning them out, such as the drink-shop, slaughter-house, factory for murderous weapons, capitalistic slave factories and estates, the army, thinking them necessary for its own maintenance. By these systems of organised demoralisation and cruelty, officialdom provokes the convict execration, "Don't they fear the Lord, the cursed soul-slayers!" The system which all must venerate and bow down to on pain of death is framed and administered by masses of officials, each one of whom is fallible, and many of whom are ridiculous. There are the prosecutors and judges, troubled more about pay than justice; the lawyers, who glory in and are applauded for defeating the right cause and securing verdicts for the wrong; the public prosecutors, whose promotions depend upon their securing convictions; the pedantic and affected administrators, who are scrupulous about the formalities but careless about the humanities; the functionaries, who are incompetent and absurd, balanced by those who are self-

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important and arrogant; the hypocrites, who hide the coarsest cupidity under fine talk about religion, justice, public law, but who cannot hide the truth that the law is mostly an instrument for upholding the interests which are beneficial to a class. The risen soul has only to contemplate this vast accumulation of officialism, under which brain, heart, nerve, conscience lie sunk in the sleep of death, persecuting humanity by a colossal scheme of courts, prisons, Siberias, Dartmoors, in order to come to this conclusion, "I consider all judging not only useless, but immoral."

All these absurdities, wrongs, barbarities, culminate in the military system which society has organised for its defence and the better preservation of its interests. In order that governing bodies may rest securely on the dead corpse of humanity, they set up a terrorising and coercing body called "the army," the members of which are kept in complete idleness (except for the useless exercises of rushing up and down, waving swords, firing guns), are greatly petted and admired, dressed in gaudy clothing, taught that it is right to put the uniform and the flag before justice and mercy, that he is the best soldier who thinks least and obeys most beast-like, that he will be most greatly honoured and rewarded who can inflict the greatest cruelties upon the largest number of people.

In order that nothing may be wanting to commend this stupendous scheme of falsehood, absurdity, savagery—this "world" against which the apostolic writers so solemnly warned men—it has appointed a church to bless it and fortify it with the sanctions of religion. This church, though it claims to have been established by Christ, is frequently set up by

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governments, and always has their financial or moral support; for it is absolutely necessary to the coherence and solidity of the worldly fabric. Without it, the official would not be able to torment, nor the soldier to kill, his brother, with a quiet conscience. But all these cruelties are not merely condoned and forgiven by the official church; they are even consecrated by prayer and holy song. Though this church claims to teach the will of Christ, it really exists to falsify and make void His law; for whilst it appoints many functionaries—some to preach, others to catechise, others to perform sacred tricks, others to watch for heresies, and yet others to persecute by fines, banishments, even death, all those who refuse to believe its superstitions or adopt its mummeries—yet these officials, by the very nature of officialdom, cannot help putting office and emolument before God and truth. That is why, to this day, the publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of heaven before the Scribes and Pharisees. Since they all alike perform their functions for pay, the priest and the prostitute are on exactly the same level.

It is the universal testimony of all those who, from Abraham to Tolstoy, have made the great pilgrimage from death to life, that the obstacles and impediments in the resurrection road are numerous; numerous also the pushings-aside and pullings-back towards the ignoble ease of the moral graveyard. All these are set forth by this mighty preacher with an insight and a power almost terrifying. They arise—to conveniently group them—from three sources: the wrong-doer, the wronged, the social order.

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The wrong-doer will find the ancient sin haunting the soul it has already enfeebled, and tempting it to repetition. Through the eye of baneful beauty it will look out at him and say, "Can you love me?" and his drowsing soul will reply, "I can!" When carnality fails, expediency will be tried; he will be wrested round from the pure contemplation of duty, of what he ought to do, to the consideration of the consequences. Selfishness will revive, persuading him to abandon the victims of his sin to their fate—"You can do nothing with this woman. . . . Why should you tie a stone round your neck?" The weakness of a spirit only half reborn will shrink from the sacrifice, and will urge him to retain, at least, the lawful enjoyments of life—from which concession, in such circumstances, the unlawful pleasures would at once follow. Humility will join forces with weakness; the old dilemma will present itself—the doubt whether the inward pleader be an angel from heaven, or only Satan in a garb of light; and he will feel a kind of shame, as if he were an impostor trying to deceive men by a show of impossible goodness. "What is the use of trying any more? . . . All are alike! . . . Such is life! . . . Why should you try to be better than the rest?" At such times, when the whole inner life wavers in the balance, he is able to restore it only by calling on that God in his soul who had come to his assistance at first. When he has resolved to give himself up, body and soul, to the salvation of the being his sin had ruined, the tempter will, by a curious but natural wile, change his feelings of spiritual love and sacrifice into passions of fear, revulsion, and disgust in presence of the very degradation he had been the cause of

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producing in her character and manner. As if Satan should hate Eve for being the very creature his selfishness had made her. A hard, cruel feeling begins to obtrude upon the former emotions of pity; a look of hatred flares out of the eyes that had begun to soften into benignity; the supreme temptation to complete the destruction begun, by committing, as it were, to hell the creature he had damned. But this also passes. The new faculties of the risen life enable him to perceive that the measure of her demoralisation and his disgust is the measure of his offence against her; and love, at last, conquers all. He perceives that his work is to awaken her soul, as his own has now been quickened. The certainty that no action of hers can change his love fills him with joy, and raises him to a level of resurrection life never before experienced.

As to the wronged one, we here see how the original wrong committed against her leads her to commit new wrongs on her own account and against others. Sin is not only entailed; it is put out to usury; it grows, it lives, as the worm lives, upon the corruption it has engendered. The luring habit of a sinful past clings to her who has contracted it; the depraved view the world of men took of her as a creature of their pleasure, has its counterpart in the depraved view she takes of the world of men as creatures of her profit. Society will consider that her past condemns her to perpetual sin, and wicked men will act on that assumption, till she comes to take a certain pride in her own importance, and develops quite a philosophy to justify herself. The injustices of law and authority will sting her



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awakening conscience, till she flies to cigarettes and vodka to dull the unwonted torment. With a premonition of coming pain, she shrinks from those who would awaken her out of her painless trance. Such are the obstacles which prevent one risen soul attempting to raise another to his own height.

An enormous bundle of difficulties arises out of the present constitution of society — its prejudices, suspicions, jealousies, conservatisms, its instinct of self-preservation, its insensate worship of the god of Things-as-they-are. From those to whom the risen soul relinquishes his earthly possessions he will not, strange to say, receive thankfulness and appreciation, but only suspicion, and even enmity; for they have so long been accustomed to be made gain of, to see that men act only from self-interest, that it is impossible for them to reverse that habit of mind, and to believe that one may really be making a sacrifice for them; and the result is, that the new man feels that he must surrender all his property without the satisfaction of knowing that those who receive it are made better or happier. But that will make no difference to the sacrifice. Neither will the new creature, eager and ardent in its new-found joy, be able to make itself understood by those who are yet in the bands of death. They will put him down with a nickname—he is a “socialist,” and that is sufficient to nullify all his ideas; or they will stick a label on his principles — they are “anarchism,” hence there is no necessity to give them further consideration. By these devices the world puts the new man away from it. Thus he gradually comes to realise that the resurrection life makes him a

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strange, incomprehensible being to the old social mummies, that his presence, which fills them with amusement at first, afterwards causes them much fear and alarm. He himself feels ill at ease in circles formerly congenial; and he perceives that even the offspring of the same parents are ill at ease in his company. Thus he enters the kingdom of life alone. As at first, so at every succeeding birth, man is born alone.

Thus, and at last, the God within comes to full consciousness, and the man is born again; he has risen from the dead. Realising that it was his dead self which was bad and disgusting, others now cease to be bad and disgusting to him; he is filled with love for those he formerly despised. In presence of the great sacrifice he can say, "My soul is at peace, and I am full of joy. . . . To-morrow a new life will begin!" He experiences the joy of a traveller on discovering a new, unknown, and beautiful world.

But the wronged sufferer from the world's triple lust—what of her? She also will awake from the dead under the vivifying influence of the spiritual love flowing from the risen soul of him who had wronged her. His love, invincible by her degradation, makes her invincible over it too, and she tramples upon the grave of her past. The inward change and health enables her to resist the tempters in her conscience, will, nerves, members, and to become pure, docile, forgiving, unselfish, spiritually loving. Tears for the wrecked life give place to plans for the future being. To live the true life is now the great thing—"loving or not loving, what does it

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matter?"—that is, in any sensuous or sexly way. The true life must be possible for all. All "must live too" on the same terms.

Now spiritual love takes the place of carnal love ; soul governs sense ; reason controls appetite ; service supplants selfishness ; sacrifice displaces concupiscence ; and this is "Resurrection."



IV

WORK WHILE YE HAVE THE  
LIGHT

I

A PARABLE OF THE WORLD'S SLAVERY  
AND CHRIST'S SERVICE



# WORK WHILE YE HAVE THE LIGHT

## A PARABLE OF THE WORLD'S SLAVERY AND CHRIST'S SERVICE

THE story of two youths; how they lived and loved;—both generous and amiable, interesting and cultivated; both handsome, manly, well-conducted, vigorous in brain, ardent in study;—but of whom Julius was a pagan, whilst Pamphilius was a Christian. And, in order that the contrasted personalities may stand out as clearer types, they are placed in that period of Roman history when the disciples of Christ's disciples were yet alive and moulded their lives according to the tradition of the Master.

It was in the city of Paul of Tarsus that birth and rich parentage fell to the lot of Julius. His father was a dealer in precious stones, of strong talents and public reputation, a thinker and a doubter, but withal a shrewd merchant who had reflected on the enormous commercial advantage of agreeing with the faith of the Emperor Trajan, and determined that his only son should be trained in such a way as to spare him his father's pains and perplexities. With this view, he committed him, at the early age of fifteen, to the entire care of a distinguished philosopher.

It happened also that a freedman of his died, leav-

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ing a son, Pamphilius, whom he decided to educate along with his own, so that the lads grew up excellent friends and good students—Julius inclining to letters and mathematics, whilst Pamphilius drew to philosophy. A year before the completion of his studies, however, Pamphilius informed his patron that his mother was going to settle with a few friends at Daphne, that it was his wish to accompany her, and so brought his studies to an abrupt conclusion.

Two years after their separation the young men met in the street, when Julius invited his friend to his father's house, eagerly plied him with questions, and was horrified to discover that he had united himself to the sect of the Christians. To be a Christian was considered the same as to be a conspirator, and the most frightful atrocities—such as the butchery and eating of little children—were attributed to them; so that Julius was filled with terror for his friend.

Explanations naturally followed, when Pamphilius related how the Christians lived in a simple way, having all things in common, and imparting their substance even to the unworthy and unthankful, treating them as dearly beloved brethren, regarding this as the surest way to reclaim them. To the young pagan, of course, it appeared ridiculous to give to whomsoever asked; even his father's hoards could not long stand that strain; how did they manage it? Pamphilius did not exactly know, except that they were always giving, and always had enough. They understood life in Christ's sense, never following pleasure for its own sake, but making the will of God the end of life, finding pleasure follow obedience as naturally as the wheels of a cart follow the shafts.



## Work while ye have the Light

Julius, though disposed to be critical and sceptical, was touched, and parted promising to accept the warm invitation to "come and see," and, if satisfied, to abide the rest of his days. But the whirl of life soon drew the young pagan in again; and, as if instinctively fearing that they might yet attract him, missed no opportunity of pointing out the seamy side of Christian disciples, reviling them by such names as "hypocrite!" "pharisee!" "deceiver!" It was indispensable to his peace of mind that they should always be wrong, and a pleasing luxury for himself to be always right—practising just what he professed, at anyrate, not saying one thing whilst doing another. Quite reassured by these egoistic blandishments, he continued to live as before.

It was the type-life of a rich young Roman under the Empire. Business, thus far, had been entirely controlled by his father, whilst the son was free to devote himself to theatres, games, slaves, mistresses, excesses of eating and drinking, which paganism could only stigmatise as extravagances, not extirpate as sins. Thus passed another two years.

But the spoiled appetite demanded ever more indulgence, and indulgence ever more money, whilst the paternal patience began to give way and the paternal purse to give out; scenes became frequent, in which Julius' insolence kept pace with his father's fury. Having killed a man in a drunken quarrel, the youthful profligate was taken into custody, and it was with difficulty his father obtained his pardon. Then Julius began to borrow—for the usurer ever follows the mistress, the second demanding more pearls, and the first more interest; the second threatening to seek a wealthier protector, and the first a more profit-

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able client. In despair, he resorted to his mother, loudly voting it either money or suicide; whereupon she, true to the types of fond mother and foolish son, went straightway to her husband, who bitterly reproached his son. He, for his part, retorting more insolence, was repaid by a blow from the paternal hand, which being seized by Julius, the father shouted for his slaves, commanding them to bind his son and lock him up. In confinement, the son cursed the father and himself, concluding that the death of one or other was the only way out. A terrible battle was meanwhile being waged between the foolish parents—the wife reviling the husband for his harshness, the husband beating the wife for her indulgence; and forgiveness was obtained at length only on condition that their child would abandon his dissolute courses and marry the daughter of a wealthy merchant.

Though he had no intention of either reforming or marrying, Julius readily gave the required promise; for home had now become a hell. The following day his mother abstracted some of her husband's jewels and handed them to her son, remarking that she would throw the blame on one of the slaves. Horrified, without touching the stones, the conscience-stricken youth left the house, and wandered outside the city till he accidentally found himself in one of the shady groves sacred to Diana, where he wrestled with his conscience, sure that everyone must long for his death. Wretched, lonely, loveless, he felt like a wild beast at bay, superior only in that he had the power to terminate his misery by death.

Prominent among the figures that now rose before his distracted mind stood the calm outline of his boyhood's friend. He recalled the invitation to seek

## Work while ye have the Light

out the Christian settlement so soon as he should have become tired of the pleasures of sin, reflecting that he was wretched who had possessed all things, whilst the friend who had possessed nothing was happy. Certain that, at anyrate, Pamphilius loved and would receive him, he took a quick resolve, exclaimed aloud, "I shall go," and wended his way towards the village where the Christians lived.

For some time he walked briskly forward with rising spirit, but, desiring to rest, sat down beside a stranger who reclined by the wayside eating his evening meal of bread and olives. His new companion was a middle-aged man of evident culture, who greeted the young man with a smile, and inquired whither he was bound. The reply that he was going to join the Christian settlement led to the telling of the whole story. The stranger listened attentively, gathered up the remaining scraps of food, adjusted his cloak, and poured upon the penitent a stream of strong, steady, learned, plausible dissuasives. He reminded Julius that he was young, handsome, healthy, rich, with passions that demanded tribute, and it was quite natural that he should long for a quiet retreat such as that promised by the Christians. There was, however, no such port of safety, for the seat of agitation was within. Christians, moreover, whether from fraud or folly, refused to recognise human nature; their teaching was only for old men, not those in the flower of their manhood; they founded their lives, not on Nature, but on the idle sayings of Jesus. How absurd it was for the Christians to pretend that the world could dispense with tribunals of justice, means of national defence, private property, and all the noblest results of civilisa-

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tion! This was only to deceive themselves, or throw dust in the public eye; since it was evident that, if they had no property of their own, they must take that of other people. Then look at the wickedness of attempting to draw men back to savagery and beastliness; for they despised all those arts and sciences which drew men nearer to the gods, such as temples, statues, theatres, museums. As for the founder of the sect, he was nothing but an ignorant deceiver. As a youth of sense and education, Julius could judge whether it was rational to discard the known will of the gods and the collective wisdom of humanity for unreasoning faith in the sayings of one man.

Hearing all this flow of argument, Julius was aghast at his incredible folly in even contemplating such a step. But what was he now to do? How extricate himself from the coil of difficulties? The stranger's counsel was, however, equal to his need. Let him return to his father, abandon all irregularities, engage in commerce, and marry according to his father's wish. If he would also occupy his mind with the arts and sciences, and devote himself to public affairs, he would assuredly find rest and happiness. After he had studied life as an independent citizen and father of a family, he could, if so minded, follow the path to retirement and quiet, which would then be a genuine predilection, not a mere outburst of discontent. Thoroughly convinced, Julius warmly thanked the stranger and returned home; was reconciled to his father upon announcing his intentions, especially his willingness to marry the young girl chosen for him; and three months later, duly celebrated his marriage with the beautiful Eulalia, took

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over a branch of his father's business, and settled down into a dignified member of society.

Shortly afterwards occurred a second meeting between the old school-friends. Driving into a little town in the neighbourhood, Julius saw Pamphilius and a girl carrying grapes for sale, and, proceeding to a quiet place, engaged his friend in conversation. He learned that Pamphilius was still a bachelor, a Christian, increasing in happiness every year, day, hour of his existence. As for Julius, he could not say he was perfectly happy—no, was not sure what the word meant. Many citizens were wealthier and more respected than he; his wife was something of a disappointment, but that was no proof that happiness could be found in *their* deceitful system. No; it was useless to repudiate the word “deceitful,” for did not Christians abjure the affairs of life, nay, life itself, even marriage → well, if not marriage, then love, and, with love, the perpetuation of the race! Pamphilius, on the other hand, proceeded to show that Christians did not repudiate love, but only lust; not marriage, but mere carnality; striving to supplant animal desire by the sentiment proper to brothers and sisters. Yes, even that pretty girl who was with him, notwithstanding Julius' innuendoes, was but a sister to him. Julius had selected his Eulalia from a short leet of three drawn up by his father on account of their wealth and beauty, because she was the prettiest and most fascinating—seeking only enjoyment; whereas a Christian chose his wife by the will of God, loving her first with brotherly affection and reverence, and rising to the special wedded love for one. Heathen love was only a

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form of violence and led to mere beastliness, as the *Iliad* clearly showed, also to jealousy and falseness. Julius might despise Pamphilius' horny hands and ragged garments, and the mean appearance of the girl, his companion, whom he yet could not help declaring might have been a very goddess of beauty; but it was the very aim of Christian love to get away from the seductions of mere animal beauty. His pagan friend might talk of this being contrary to Nature, but that only raised the further question of what true nature was. The heathen was true to the animal nature, the Christian to the rational nature.

It was impossible, admitted Julius, not to feel the charm of this conception; but there was no getting away from the fact that the Christian theory of life led back to savagery, and that their pretending not to care for private property was mere deception; to which Pamphilius replied that they cared for art and science in so far as they increased the force necessary to a life of labour and love, and sold grapes merely to obtain the necessaries of life. Christians, he continued, joyfully accepted the scorn of such as Julius; for it was evident they sought only happiness, sought it by submission to violence and giving all their property away. It was a mistake to upbraid them for preferring the teachings of their crucified Master to the accumulated wisdom of mankind, for experience proved that all who sought happiness aright found Christ on the road before them. "Was he truly happy?" Unspeakably! "Ah!" said Julius, "I too might have been happy if I had gone over to you, if I had not met the stranger! But now . . . ." Ah, now it was not possible. He had just begun a different kind of life, and it

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would not be wise to break it off too suddenly. Fancy the disappointment of his father, friends, wife. No, no, such a revolution was impossible.

At this moment the young girl came to the door, having sold all her grapes, and with the proceeds purchased some wheat which was carried by another youth named Cyril, who, it was easy to see, stood in the same relation to her that Pamphilius did. A friendly contest took place between the youths as to which should stay behind, each desiring for the other the happiness of returning with Magdalen. The brotherly struggle at length terminated in favour of Pamphilius, who went away with Magdalen, carrying the wheat. At a bend of the street he turned, smilingly nodded to Julius, made some remark to Magdalen, and disappeared. "Yes," mused Julius, "how much better had I gone over to the Christians!" And in his imagination a picture framed itself—a picture of Pamphilius wedded to Magdalen, contrasted with his own hearth and wife. Presently, however, a merchant accosted him; they proceeded to join some comrades; there was dinner and drink to a late hour; and at night with his wife.

In this manner passed another ten years, in which the memory of his old comrade waxed dim in the mind of Julius. His father had died, leaving him in charge of the entire business. His wife had added three children to his cares; he had filled some civic offices, and, having considerable gifts, was looked upon as a rising man. The new conditions, however, only brought new forms of unhappiness. Absorbed in the duties of a mother—what with nurses wet and nurses dry—his wife was less solicitous about her husband, and had, besides, lost much of her fresh-

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ness and beauty, whilst intercourse with a Christian female slave had led her to discard much of the outward gloss of paganism. Under these circumstances, Julius had contracted a friendship with a light woman in whose society he spent his leisure hours. Still happiness came not. Every pleasure was poisoned. He was filled with the loathing that comes of satiety.

Just at this period, whilst driving a chariot in the Olympian races, he had a severe accident which kept him three months in bed. Now just when, in the retirement of a sick-room, he was filled with mournful contemplations of his past life, a number of other disagreeable events occurred: his slave robbed him, his concubine deserted him, his rival supplanted him in public office—and all from the trivial circumstance that he had driven his chariot just half an inch too much to the left! From conversation with his wife's Christian slave, he learned of the marriage and supreme happiness of Pamphilius and Magdalen, which seemed in mournful contrast to his own discontent. As if to decide him at this turning-point, there fell into his hands a Greek manuscript which pointed out the ways of Life and Death; and the reader, entering into communion with the spirit of the departed teacher, saw that his life had been a terrible mistake. Astonished that he could ever have listened to the seductive stranger, he yet remembered one part of his advice—"When you have tasted life, then, if you will, go over to the Christians." "I have tasted life!" he exclaimed; "I will become a Christian;" and he informed his delighted wife of his resolution.

His wounds not being entirely healed, Julius was



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induced to receive advice from a clever physician, who, on being introduced, proved to be the identical wayside stranger whose dissuasives had been so powerful on the previous occasion. In reply to his patient's eager question whether he would soon be able to dig, he remarked that to dig seemed a strange ambition for a rich man, and was informed of the renewed vow to become a Christian. Then he poured out another stream of sophistical dissuasions. The Christians propounded some charming falsehoods, he did not deny, but had no pith or marrow in their conception of life—no wars, executions, poverty, immorality; fondly dreaming that all these great human necessities could be supplanted by the law of Christ. And who, after all, was this unmarried tramp they called Jesus, whose law, if followed out, would speedily cause the race to become extinct? As for Julius, he had children to educate for the commonwealth, and it should be a point of honour to fulfil his momentous public duties. This was his second period of doubt; he had become morbid; let him but march on and all his doubts would vanish into air! After he had completed his service to society, then, if still in the same mind, would be the time to test the life that so attracted him.

Now whether it was due to the medicine or the advice, Julius began to regain strength, and his former ideas seemed like the ravings of a madman. He busied himself about the new life sketched by his mentor, gave himself ardently to public affairs, and speedily gained immense influence in the city.

Thus passed another twelvemonth away, at the

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end of which Julius was appointed to judge the Christians at their town, which was not far off, for it had been decided to stamp out Christianity in Cilicia. On his way to the tribunal he was accosted by Pamphilius, who was accompanied by his little boy, with a request that the Christians who had been publicly marked out for death might be allowed to make a public profession of their faith. They did not ask to be pardoned, for they held it to be their mission to bear witness to the truth, indifferent whether by eighty years of labour and love, or by a cruel death; they desired only that their trial and execution should take place in the presence of the people.

After promising to do all he could, the pagan judge began loftily to lecture Pamphilius on that system of self-love, faintheartedness, debility and disease called Christianity—a creed for women, not men. Oh yes, he knew, for he had himself been smitten. Christians protested against all the institutions which bound men together—such as law-courts, taxes, executions, wars—reaping all the advantages without contributing anything to the sum of human effort. Let them have their way, and Rome would soon be slave to the savage Scyths.

Presently the patient Christian had his turn. At great length he showed how false and misleading were the notions of Julius. Christians were not proud madcaps eager to be martyred; but they preferred to love rather than kill their enemies, and to suffer rather than share the violence of States. Christianity took away the very motive for robbery, murder, and violence, for it asked the individual to surrender his all. It crushed and tamed the animal passions

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by lives of labour and love, and thus extinguished crimes arising from carnal love, jealousy, revenge. It prevented the political crimes of Anarchists and Nihilists, for it taught that lives of solicitude and toil were better and more difficult than deeds of bloody prowess.

Then how is it, inquired Julius, that people persecute and kill you as if you were the greatest of evildoers? "Ah," said Pamphilius, "the source of that anomaly is outside us, in the laws of Cæsar so far as they contradict the laws of God, which alone we obey, and the vexation of those who put the legislative measures of a State above God's will." But Christians feared not them which killed the body.

At this point Pamphilius' little son rushed into the room, upon which his father fondled him, sighed, and rose to depart; but was persuaded to remain to dinner, as Julius was anxious to inquire into the question of a Christian's children. It seemed to him that Christianity was a religion only for the unmarried; for Christian children would have no slaves to attend them, nor any property to inherit. To Pamphilius, on the other hand, it seemed that paganism was the religion fit only for the unmarried; for the great mass of pagan children had nothing but toil and oppression, whilst the few who inherited slaves and palaces were taught to live upon others in idleness and luxury—and this was called making provision for their children!

Julius was silent, but reflected that the education of his children had only begun, under the best masters; when they were of age they could embrace the Christian faith if so disposed. "As for me," he said, "I can do so when I have provided for my

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children." So Pamphilius and his little son departed. After the trial, Julius saw him assisting to remove the bodies of the martyrs, but did not accost him, or invite him to his house.

Twelve years now passed away. The wife of Julius was dead, but he had acquired immense wealth and power. His sons were living the same life of luxury and extravagance he himself had done before them, and with the same domestic strife that had prevailed between his father and himself.

Just at that time a new viceroy was appointed from Rome; Julius was degraded and threatened with banishment. He repaired to Rome, but was commanded to return. Reaching Tarsus, he found his son banqueting with several dissolute young men in the house. A report that Julius was dead had arrived, and his son was now joyfully celebrating the event! The outraged father felled him to the ground, leaving him for dead, and withdrew to the apartment of his late wife. There he found a scroll bearing the words, "Come unto Me," and, sitting with the manuscript spread over his knee, reflected how long he had been called, how oft he had refused! He rose and went to see his son, whom he found recovered and standing on his feet. Without a word he left the house, and took the road for the Christian community.

The whole day he journeyed, and went into a villager's house to pass the night. A man who was stretched out on the couch rose up as he entered, and Julius found himself again confronted with the physician! "No! never again shall you dissuade me," exclaimed Julius; "now, this third time, at last

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I go where I may find peace!" "Where?" "To the Christians!" Well, yes, pursued incarnate Paganism, you may possibly find peace, but you will not be doing your duty. Now, just when you have acquired experience and wisdom, when your services might be of inestimable value to the commonwealth, you sneak away, seeking repose and tranquillity for yourself! Your wisdom has been gained in society, and it is your duty to use it for the benefit of society. "Wisdom!" exclaimed the unhappy penitent; "I am a bundle of errors! True, they are ancient errors; but antiquity does not transform errors into wisdom, any more than age and putridity turn water into wine." And, catching up his mantle, he quitted the house, resting nowhere till the journey's end.

The long shadows were just passing into the dark of next evening when Julius reached the town of the Christians, where he received a cordial welcome. Pamphilius recognised him at table, and with an affable smile ran up and embraced him. He passed the night in the house appointed for wayfarers, and in the morning went out to work in the vineyards.

The first vineyard was a young plantation, bending with rich clusters, tended by young people, and had no place for the old beginner. The second was past its maturity, with a smaller crop; but the brethren were working in pairs, and again Julius failed to find occupation. The third was very old, empty, warped, crooked, almost devoid of fruit; and, reflecting that this represented his life, he sat down and wept bitterly. Suddenly a voice fell on his ear. "Work, dear brother, work is sweet!" Looking up, he saw a very old man, with snow-white hair and

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tottering feet, standing beside a vine, gathering rare, sweet grapes here and there. He showed Julius how to look for the very few clusters, and, finding some, Julius brought them. "Look, look!" said the old man, "in what are these inferior?" He saw that they were good, smaller, but rich and sweet. "Grieve not," said his companion, "there are other servants. God's work is within you. You are not a workman, but a son. With God there is neither little nor great; only straight or crooked. Enter on the straight road! Work while ye have the light!"

Calm and peace of mind now fell on Julius. Living for the good of his fellow-men, he laboured joyfully for twenty years, his soul too full to perceive the slow approach of physical death.

IV

WORK WHILE YE HAVE THE  
LIGHT

2

THE INTERPRETATION: LIGHT THAT  
NEVER FAILS





# WORK WHILE YE HAVE THE LIGHT

## THE INTERPRETATION: LIGHT THAT NEVER FAILS

THIS radiant homily has been making its appeal to the English-speaking world now these dozen years, and, if not the greatest, is certainly the delicatest, sweetest, purest of the prophet's epoch-making discourses. The mere novel-reader will doubtless object to the flimsy framework of narrative, complain of its plentiful lack of incident, and condemn it for beguiling him into recurring lengths of dissertation. From the point of view of fiction, let the objection be sustained. Yet is not the preacher to blame, for when did he profess to lay aside the ethicist for the sake of the fictionist, or the preacher for the novelist? One might as reasonably indict the Evangelists for expanding at length the interpretations of the various parables spoken by the Master, and exclaim against the heavenly meaning tacked on to the earthly story—indignant that the celestial fiction should be designed to instruct instead of to amuse. If the pleasure-seeker has no ears to hear, the truth-seeker has, and will hearken what the Spirit now saith unto

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the churches. To the angels of the churches of Christendom write . . . . .

This chaste pearl of Tolstoyan discourse presents the False Life of Society in contrast with the True Life of Christianity; shows that salvation is found, not in condemning the False, but in embracing the True Life; and concludes with an alluring example of conversion to the True Life.

## I

Following in loose fashion the usual sermonic habit, the chief and longer portion of this illumined utterance is found to consist of a Contrast between the False Life of Society and the True Life of Christianity.

(1) Several types of the False Life are presented, all tending to illustrate the general conditions of misery, luxury, pride, ferment, rottenness, *ennui*, and dying regrets which make up the worldly way.

Here is the gilded youth, surrounded by his curios and art collections, yet still so uncivilised as to follow after theatres, spectacles, and every animal excess, landing himself in debt and usury; heady, insolent, disobedient, lawless; a grief to his parents, a danger to society, a disappointment to himself.

Here, too, is the rising publicist, his wild oats duly sown, giving himself to the marriage of convenience, wealth - gathering, office - seeking, rising in credit, swelling in public dignity, sitting in judgment upon the forces of righteousness and condemning them amid universal applause.

The wealthy householder is here, transferring to

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public ambition that devotion which should have been bestowed upon his children, estranged from his faded wife and inclining to lighter friendships, too busy to be weary, yet too materialised to be happy, proprietor of a vast domestic establishment, but without a home.

The reputable commercial man is here also, self-made, thrifty, shrewd, travelled, wide in experience of men and affairs, not without deeper currents of being, but steadily directing them along the channels of public success, who, having begotten a family, thinks it necessary to make vast provision for them, and discovers that he has created wealth only to be their ruin.

Thus do the children of this world think themselves wiser than the children of light.

(2) The Worldly Life is here shown to consist of the abundance of the things which it possesses; whereas the Christian Life aims at having all things in common. Property—the relation of the thing to the soul—constitutes an insurmountable rocky barrier between the False and the True Life. The worldly way of holding property is to refuse to use it in harmony with the will of God, to imagine that it is one's own, that there is nothing to pay, that all its fruits may be enjoyed without more ado. Thus does the property-owner drive away those who come to claim God's portion; kill them, if need be, by means of police and military forces, being himself finally driven away into those realms where he can carry nothing with him.

Christians, on the other hand, regard nothing as their own, but hold themselves bound to share the fruits of their toil with all—even with those who

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seem unworthy. Always giving, they always have enough. They accept life as Christ interpreted it, and find the forces of faith grow stronger and stronger within them. Their idea is that the pleasures of life are no pleasures if followed for their own sake; that true happiness is something superadded to those who perform God's will; and that if duty goes first, like the shaft of the cart, pleasure, like the wheel, will inevitably follow. They plant and dig, as others do, yet not to increase their personal possessions, but to obtain the necessities of existence, to supply those who need, even to yield up to the extortioner and the robber if it must be so, to give to him that asks, and to lend, hoping for nothing again. It is absurd to argue that industry and agriculture would cease if this law prevailed; for even now the great mass of toilers toil only to increase the possessions of the idle rich, and would surely work not less diligently if the product went to benefit themselves and all those they love and pity.

(3) From the possession of private property follows, necessarily, all those forms of State violence which society devises in order to keep its goods secure, but for which the Christian, having no personal goods to secure to himself, has no use. The violence practised by society through its soldiers, judges, and so on, is as truly abominable as that perpetrated by highwaymen; for its sole object is to take or keep that which should be shared with or given wholly to others. The multiplication of repressive laws and penalties is, however, found quite ineffectual to prevent robberies and murders on the part of individuals who take that way of asserting their claim to what they consider to be their own. An entire

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class of crimes are rather aggravated by repressive laws—such as those which spring from revenge, hatred, jealousy, carnal lust; for the persons controlled by such passions are in a condition of animal irresponsibility which obstacles only tend to inflame. Sometimes the effect is to drive criminals to work more cunningly and devise new forms of offence; sometimes even to afford the wrong-doer a protecting wing, and make crime safer. It is certain that, as laws increase in number and complexity, morals decrease, and criminal offences become more various and artificial. The law enters, and sin abounds.

In distinction from all this, Christianity requires no legions to protect the lives and properties of its adherents; for they count nothing their own, and are willing to part with all, even to be servant to those who rob them, in order to win them by love. Consequently they have no enemies, offer no temptations, and give no provocation to vice. Living by humility, patience, and labour, they excite neither covetousness nor envy, and thus obviate both the passions and circumstances which lead to violence. Therefore they do not need the delusive protection offered them by Cæsar and his legions. Christianity, in fact, is the only sure way of eradicating crime; for it goes down to the source, plucks the individual propensity out of the soul, removes every motive and occasion of wrong-doing, tames the irascible passions by labour and love, and meets the revolutionary conspirator on the common ground of brotherhood. Many political and social conspiracies spring from a sincere desire to improve the condition of the exploited classes; but Christians make crime

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for such ends quite impossible by teaching that a life of toil and solicitude is better than one of plotting and scheming ; that renunciation and living for others is better as well as more difficult than deeds of bloody prowess ; and that it is nobler to achieve the crown of martyrdom for adhering to the law of Christ than the scaffold of criminality for rebelling against the laws of Cæsar.

(4) The radical difference between the False Life of the world and the True Life of Christ is that the former accepts the animal in man as a permanent necessity, whereas the latter believes it possible to live according to the soul. Society imagines that armies, tribunals, scaffolds, tributes, and taxes are the bonds which bind it together, and is unable to conceive how it would exist were these abolished. The sentiments of anger, vindictiveness, revenge must be divine, because they are essential to life as we continue to practise it ; and it is by the constant play of passion and clash of interest that people are held fast in their social conditions. To demolish human passions, therefore, is to destroy humanity itself ; and a society that does not include wars, executions, and servitudes is as inconceivable as one that excludes eating and drinking ; it would quickly fall to pieces and return to pristine savagery ; the civilised man would become the slave of the cannibal. It is just the same with the sexual passion. It is necessary to recognise human nature, to remember that not all men are old, snowy, frostbitten ; that many are young, strong, handsome, made for indulgence. To follow any other law than that of Nature, by attempting to curb and extirpate those necessary passions, would have the same result as if waters were pent

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up in a dam till it delved into the soil or flowed in a thick muddy stream; but to permit Nature to have her way by setting the passions free for enjoyment, would be to let loose the waters to fructify field and meadow, and refresh the beasts that were grazing thereon.

The very object of Christianity, on the other hand, is to eradicate the animal lusts, and bring every man under the sovereignty of Christ's law of love. It is a creed for men as well as women. The retreat of carnal desire before the advance of reverence and self-control, will constitute humanity's surest progress towards strong and sane existence. This will appear more clearly as the preacher sets forth the next great contrast.

(5) The False Life subordinates marriage to lust, whilst the True Life makes marriage subservient to character. The disciple of the world selects his wife for her beauty with a view to fleshly gratification, and for her affluence with an eye to comfort and worldly advancement; and each strives to secure these according to his ability. This changes the high estate into beastliness, and degrades the husband into a violent ravisher, since it is often the case that he marries a girl who does not love him, or even who loves another. The fact that personal enjoyment is made the dominant aim breeds satieties, quarrels, jealousies, falseness; with results which may be plainly read, for instance, in the *Iliad* of Homer, in the calamities which overtake Paris, Menelaus, Achilles, and the rest. A worldly marriage is really a triumph of violence, like the snatching of Helen. Rival men strain every nerve to excel each other in offering inducements such as good looks, manly form,

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great wealth, fine dresses, grand establishments; and sometimes they actually fight like brutes eager to win the female.

What a beautiful opposite to all this is the true marriage in which the well-being and spiritual good of the parties is made the principal aim! Instead of deliberately provoking carnal love as if it were a good and proper aim in itself—which is to make it an evil—Christians make it subsidiary to the improvement of character, celebrate it according to the will of God, and thus vindicate it as a positive good from Him. To such an extent is carnality excluded, that the lustful glance towards even betrothed maid or wedded wife is forbidden; whilst Christian women, for their part, so far from trying to excite carnal desire by dress and other suggestion, strive to stifle those desires in men, and to supplant them by the sentiments proper to brother and sister. Marriage is more than the cornerstone of the home; it is the keystone of the whole edifice of life; and though it is to be regarded as the means of the perpetuation of the race, yet it is to be carried through under those conditions laid down by the Father's will expressed both in Nature and Revelation. The Spirit of Christ, love for mankind, form safer and surer guides to God's will than the workings of carnal affection or material ambition. A general love for all mankind is the surest guarantee of a pure, exclusive love for one woman. A Christian loves a woman first as a fellow-creature, with brotherly affection and reverence, and only on the basis of this raises the special love whose result is the family. Fixing his mind on love, reverence, and service, the Christian is never overcome by the seductions of mere beauty, hence his wedded life is free from satiety,



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disappointment, feud, and jealousy. Christianity alone produces true manly love by making each the master of his likes and dislikes, so that he avoids giving loose reins to his fancies, extinguishes every coarse animal motion, and achieves the same pure and chivalrous relation to every woman that exists between fathers and daughters, mothers and sons, brothers and sisters. If it happens that two Christian men specially love the same woman, one sacrifices himself willingly ; and if they are unable to decide amongst themselves, the three call in the older and wiser disciples of the Christ-life, who help them to a decision. This is contrary to human nature ? Which human nature—the animal, or the rational ? Here is the whole difference come to a fine point—worldly love puts the animal over the rational nature, whence violence, adultery, incest ; whereas Christian love puts the rational over the animal nature, and obtains complete happiness. The whole question is, Shall reason reign, or the brute ?

(6) The children born of such unions necessarily present the most astonishing contrast in character and destiny. Worldly wedlock produces children whose horrid fate it is to be continually exposed to dangers and temptations, to snatch their livelihood by exploiting the labours of others, to riot in palaces because others pine in slums, to do no useful work, but get their parents to make provision for them to their ruin.

The offspring of Christian union, on the other part, are regarded as of such infinite value that they must be guarded from the lusts and idleness of the world by dedication to the supreme life of labour and love. On no other basis than love and labour can

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the family thrive. If anything were wanting to complete the Christian's assurance, it is the sad fate of the world's children contrasted with the strong, simple, sane, self-reliant, competent character of the children of Christ. The life of the world is pardonable only in those who are without offspring. The Christian alone is morally justified in marriage and fertility.

(7) The False Life is so clamant and imperious that it forces everything—even the Arts and Sciences—into the service of lust and luxury; whilst the True Life makes Art and Science handmaidens to character and moral development. The world can put its divine Science to no better use than to concoct ingenious schemes for making money at the expense of the already poor; or making murder easier by inventing more deadly methods of war. As for Art, it is employed sometimes to adorn the temples of gods in which society has ceased to believe, but through belief in whom it hopes to keep the multitude better in hand; sometimes to raise statues to the strongest and cruellest of its tyrants, whom none loves but all fear, or hang its galleries with portraits of its richest robbers and their pampered offspring; sometimes to gild crime and laud carnal love by theatrical displays; sometimes by its sensuous music to tickle the senses of rich gluttons, melt down the moral reserves and distinctions into a squash of neurotic sensations, or soothe the nerves of disappointed ambition, jilted lust, wounded pride, worn-out profligacy, or hysterical femininity.

The Christian life, like the worldly, has room for every development of knowledge and beauty, honours every divine gift and capacity, and strives to draw

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man away from the state of savagery and beastliness. The life of labour and love may cause a comely youth to go with horny hands, or a beautiful girl with peasant dress, but it does not renounce the beautiful in human nature. All true Art and Science, however, is known from the degree in which it increases the forces necessary to labour and love. It is right to take every opportunity of increasing this knowledge, by leisure, by studying the bequeathed wisdom of the ages, by song, picture, and story; but this knowledge should be directed to fulfilling the will of God, not to the increase of war, usury, sensuality, serfdom. In short, Art and Science should not be made the minister of the senses as with the world, but of the soul as with Christianity.

Such, according to the great Russian preacher, is the False Life from which Christ came to set men free; and such the True Life lived and taught by the Master and by the early Christians who still held fast to His law—that eternal law common to all mankind, but most fully expressed by Him—preferring to die rather than be unfaithful. Obedience to God would sometimes necessitate disobedience to Cæsar, thus bringing down wrath and persecution from those who gave State law precedence over Divine law, and who, being quite satisfied with their position as subjects of a State, were incensed at those who proclaimed a nobler destiny and mission—reluctant to follow this destiny for themselves, and unwilling to admit it for others. Christians were quite unable to put an end to such hostility; for it was impossible that they could live contrary to reason

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and conscience, or cease to tacitly rebuke those whose lives were founded on violence. The servant was not greater than his Lord. Yet they feared not those who killed the body. Their life knew no death. In time their executioners would also die; they were the real sufferers, for death could not hurt the Christian. And their happiness consisted in this, that die who might, Christ's flock would not perish, but grow and thrive.

To this end—that it may be so in these modern times—the preacher has given us this pearl amongst sermons, "Work while ye have the light."

### II

The minor and shorter division of this chaste yet searching discourse consists in showing that salvation is found not merely in condemning the False Life, but by actively embracing the True Life.

(1) If a number of people be gathered together under suitable circumstances—say under the hospitable roof of a rich man, and if the conversation chance to take a serious turn—say about human life and its purpose, neither amongst themselves nor all the absent friends they may discuss will they be able to find one single man who is satisfied with his life, or deems himself to be living like a Christian.

(2) The ardent youth, hearing all their confessions, will exclaim, "Why, then, go on living this miserable way?" and will announce his determination to abandon it. He will see that his actions are bad and foolish, feel alone in the universe, loved by none, a burden to all; will complain that the only difference

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between himself and a beast is that he retains the power to take away his own life, and will make preparation for a complete change. He will discontinue his studies, dispossess himself of his estates, retire to the country, and work amongst the poor. But Mr Worldly-wise-man, in the person of his father, while pronouncing the decision a noble one, will object that his son's generous enthusiasm does not see the difficulties in the way; that his resolution, squarely looked at, is in fact the outcome of thoughtlessness and pride. The wisdom of age is needed to moderate the ardour of youth. Let him wait till he is matured, when he will be better able to judge. All the reverent seniors will applaud the father's counsel; the youth will be put to silence, and things will go on as before. The whirl of the old life will draw him in. Habit will chain and convenience beguile him. Philosophy will befool him. Religion will deceive him. Age, wisdom, and experience will dissuade him. Reassured, he will go on living as before, contenting himself by abusing as pharisees and deceivers those who have actually committed themselves to the True Life.

(3) The middle-aged married man is quite convinced that the present way of life cannot possibly confer happiness, is tired of toiling and moiling for a family, with some guilt of conscience to boot, and is prepared to favourably consider the True Life. Presently he reflects that it will not do to break off the old ways too suddenly, to disappoint his aged parents, or inflict loss upon his children, or neglect those duties to the commonwealth to fulfil which is a point of honour. He remembers how easy it is to go astray; that he must not shirk his duties

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to his family, but bring them up in peace and quiet, so that they may afterwards be free to choose the True Life for themselves. After he has served society and left his children to serve it after he is gone, he can then give himself to the Life that attracts him. Then he will be free. Meantime, things go on as before.

(4) The old man reflects that, having brought up all his children, served society, with no further duty or obligation resting upon him, there is nothing to hinder him from living as Christ would have him. His son, however, will object that he has worked hard enough in his time and must now rest; his godchild will protest that he must not now give up his lifelong habits and tastes; his niece will declare that he would only grumble under the new conditions, thus incurring further sin—besides, God is merciful and pardons; whilst another aged sire will interject that, as they may not have another two days to live, it would be foolish to fritter them away in forming new plans. So things go on as before.

(5) Thus it comes about—extraordinary, incomprehensible sequel to such universal condemnation!—that all classes and ages continue to live as before. All are agreed that the life of the world is bad, yet no sooner is it a question of beginning to practise the good life than they all discover excellent reasons why they must be excepted. They all with one consent begin to make excuse. The worldly merchant, shrewd man, recognises the advantage of falling in with the established order of things. The worldly philosopher sets forth imposing sophistries, whose result is to bewilder the reason and forever

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dissuade men from the True Life. Young men, middle-aged men, old men—no one feels himself called to lead the good life. The utmost they can be expected to do is to discourse about it.

(6) When their own indisposition has finally persuaded men to abide in the False Life of the world, argument is not wanting to back it. Numerous sophistries, plausibilities, speciosities are furnished forth, salving the conscience with excellent and abundant excuse.

Foremost come the imperfections of Christians, which are eagerly canvassed by those who hear the divine call and have an instinctive fear that it may yet prove too strong for them; for which reason they discount it in advance and minimise its importance. They watch for the seamy side of Christianity—the inconsistencies of those who pretend to give everything away, yet wear a coat or sell fruit for a livelihood; or profess to repudiate military violence, yet avail themselves of the protection of the military forces. Such persons are like a tumour, which destroys the body, yet lives solely on the body. It is indispensable to the waverer's peace of mind that Christians should be wrong, so they are denounced as deceivers whose only force lies in high-flown phrases.

Excuse is next drawn from the general imperfection of human nature. Christianity would be all very well in a world of angels, but how in a world of such rascals? How can they part their goods to the lazy, the incorrigible, the exploiter? To pretend to treat them as dearly beloved brethren is hypocrisy. It is contrary to human nature to love rascals. To give to everyone that asks is manifestly impossible, since

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even the richest hoard would give out if drawn on for the supply of every wastrel and vagabond. When the millennium comes it may be possible to lend, hoping for nothing again; but meantime they must take human nature as they find it, and act accordingly.

Finally, it would be rash to reject the accumulated wisdom of mankind. Christianity is no doubt a very charming faith whose ideals appeal to the imagination of all simple people; but, after all, Jesus was but a peasant in an obscure Jewish community, and it would be obviously impossible to apply his precepts to the complicated life of modern civilisation. After political and revolutionary forces have brought about a higher and simpler social order, it may be practicable to conduct life on the principles laid down by the unlearned, unmarried Galilean. Meanwhile, we must continue to avail ourselves of the experience of the ages and the accumulated wisdom of mankind.

(7) Yet is the True Life embraced at last by some who have doubted and evaded through the sinful years of a lifetime. When the soul sits alone amid a litter of broken ideals and wrecked principles, meditating on its past, recalling its opportunities, it hears the Voice saying, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," and realises how long it has been called. Never again can the man be dissuaded from carrying out his resolve, for he knows that thus alone can he find peace of mind. Catching up his mantle, he quits the old life, and continues his journey Christ-ward without resting. He becomes a copartner with God, a sharer of His work. Going forward with God, he



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thinks no more of the past. He finds there is one God and one Life. He obtains the peace of mind he had yearned for. The life of love and labour fills him with joy. The soul is too full to allow him to perceive the slow approach of physical death.

"Work while ye have the light!"

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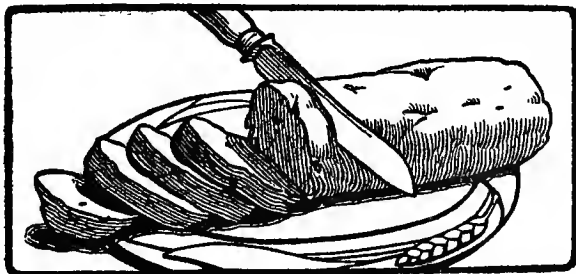
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